

MADELEINE GRAHAM



BY THE AUTHOR OF "WHITEFRIARS."

NOVELS AT TWO SHILLINGS.

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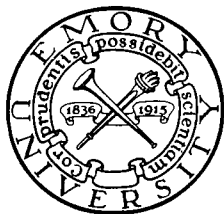
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MADELEINE GRAHAM

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WHITEFRIARS"

—“And if I laugh, it is but that
I may not weep.”—*Byron.*

LONDON
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BY THE AUTHOR OF "WHITEFRIARS."

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MADELEINE GRAHAM



CHAPTER I.

A FINISHING EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT FOR YOUNG LADIES.

AT the Misses Sparx's Finishing Educational Establishment for Young Ladies, in the Royal Parish of Kensington, all the accomplishments were taught, and the moral and physical wellbeing of the pupils was most carefully attended to, by thoroughly competent persons, enlightened in every respect to the immense responsibility of the task confided to them by parents and guardians—at the moderate rate of one hundred guineas per annum. Washing, calisthenics, separate apartments, a pew at church, astronomy, deportment, geology, and Hebrew, were charged as extras.

The three principals were themselves most accomplished ladies, as became them—sisters.

The eldest Miss Sparx, who had received the name of Susannah from her godfathers and godmothers, was verging on her forty-seventh year, unmarried ; and her temper was not supposed to be improved by the circumstance. She was skilled in every species of fine work, and understood the Use of the Globes, as was proved by her wearing spectacles while the pupils turned those spherical bodies, celestial and terrestrial, round and round, with indifference or eagerness, according to idiosyncrasy, working out the recondite problems contained in certain small 12mo books, handsomely bound in red imitation calf, with a frontispiece

by which you could always tell, given your own time, what o'clock it was at Pekin : the same being entitled, in letters of gold, *Goldsmith's Geography*.

Besides these branches of useful information, Miss Sparx was understood to conduct a class of Biblical Literature—on the most orthodox principles, be sure—twice a week ; to give lessons in Botany and Mineralogy on the Mondays and Fridays, and entertaining lectures on Physiology, Political Economy, and General Metaphysics, on the Thursdays and Saturdays—unless the morning happened to be very fine on the day last mentioned, when the young ladies were sometimes allowed to spend the hour properly devoted to the above intellectual enjoyment in an extra perambulation in Kensington Gardens. Particularly when Miss Sparx—or Mrs. Sparx, as she was now not unfrequently styled by ignorant strangers, who, however, meant well—had a bilious headache, which, poor woman, was not so seldom the case as must have been desirable for a person who was obliged to dedicate that organ to uses so multifarious, and so considerably out of the average capacity of the female human cerebrum to store in different compartments, and keep from an unseemly chaoticising in the reproduction. Though, indeed, I do not go so far as to say that this was always the case, or to pretend that occasionally sciences so likely to run into one another—from their extremely close juxtaposition, if from nothing else—did not sometimes accomplish that feat ; or, at least, produce upon the minds of the young lady pupils, under Miss Sparx's most lucid scientific exposition, all the same effect.

To sum up the eldest Miss Sparx's attributes, she read prayers morning and evening—said grace before and after every meal but supper, which, for some reason or other, was not held to require it—perhaps because the young ladies were not present to report—and kept the accounts. Item, she was known indifferently among the pupils, in private conversation, as the Dowager Miss Sparx, or as Mother Minerva—though I think the experiment was seldom made to ascertain whether she answered to either appellation.

The second (in point of antiquity) Miss Sparx, Hortensia by name, instructed the pupils who enjoyed the advantages of this modern encyclopediacal (not maniacal) academy, in English Grammar (without knowing it herself); Elocution, particularly as applied to Poetry; Dramatic Recitation, and "the Ordinary Tone of *viva voce* reading in the drawing-room,"—so the prospectus said. General Literature was another of her departments, giving her reasons for excluding all sorts of pernicious works from the category—the titles of which the girls remembered. She could teach any pupil who was desirous of extending her philological intimacies so far the Elements of Greek and Latin, which she had herself acquired from a mature clergyman in one of the neighbouring churches used by the school, whom it was thought—at least, reported—she was trying her might and main to hook into matrimony. Common Arithmetic, Cosmogony, and the Art of Making Wax Flowers, completed what were technically styled "Miss Hortensia's duties;" and in this last accomplishment she succeeded so well, that her elder sister (which, that she was, Miss Hortensia hardly ever mentioned her without stating), as professoress of botany, took many occasions to assure the female public that she was herself puzzled to distinguish between her sister's performances and those of nature, and that it was quite as easy to illustrate the "Linnæan configurations" of camellias, for example, from her imitations, as from the best-preserved skeletons in an *Herbarium* or *Hortus Siccus*,—learned-sounding expressions, to which the eldest Miss Sparx herself attached no particular meaning, but, like wise people in general, was always worrying others to make them understand.

Miss Hortensia had passed her twenty-seventh year by her own account, and her five-and-thirtieth by the parish register. She was tall, and very genteel, though perhaps a trifle too thin, if a person can be so who is understood to have realised six or seven thousand pounds. If she had not been so *genteel*, the Reverend Jabez Bulteel somewhat disconcertedly assured certain of his rollicking university friends, whom he had introduced to his intended,

he really could not have gone in for the chance himself at any price.

But it must be declared, after all, that the real strength and popularity of the Sparx Gymgynæcium (a designation which the Reverend Jabez had either invented or selected when engaged in the preparation of his great work on the languages of Babel) lay chiefly in the youngest partner and preceptress, Miss Rosabella Sparx. She, with the assistance of masters, who did not come nearly so often as they were charged for, instilled a knowledge of the Fine Arts really worth knowing; namely, dancing, embroidery and tapestry-work, the pianoforte, singing in the Italian manner, how to dress your hair most becomingly, how to glide swimmingly into a drawing-room, all the varieties of the curtsy, charade-playing, and general morals. It need not be added, that Miss Rosabella Sparx was by far the most esteemed and cherished of all the mistresses of the establishment by its youthful inmates. And she deserved it in other respects; for she was a very lively, vivacious, cheerful little woman, was really ten or fifteen years younger than either of her sisters, and had been seen to smile—nay, had once or twice laughed heartily—at the caricatures which certain of the girls, gifted with talent in that way, were always making of her two elders. In reward for which condescension and amiability, the young ladies circulated constant reports among themselves that Miss Rosabella had several admirers, from whom she was at liberty to choose a husband; had declined a grocer, and jilted a surgeon; and, finally, that she was engaged to be married to a captain in the army, who had seen her accidentally in the Park, walking out with them—than which, no possible estate of womankind was imagined by most of the fair young commentators to be more enjoyable and worthy of approving estimation.

Besides these heads of the establishment, there were two female teachers attached to it *en permanence*. Madame Beata Fürschener, a Swiss lady, who asserted that her language was German, taught it there, and superintended the young ladies' linen. Also a young Parisienne, a certain

Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt, who taught—ay, what did Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt teach in this admirably well-ordered radiating point of modern intelligence?

Her own language, for one thing, it was certain—conversationally and practically, as well as grammatically, of course, you know. Any thing else? Perhaps. In fact, it is hardly possible to teach French without teaching a good deal besides, especially in the present state of the literature of Imperial France, so well calculated to diffuse every where the most admirable social opinions and maxims, and to bring up other capitals towards the supreme level of civilisation attained by

“Cette ville corrompte, qui corrompt l’univers.”

This first-rate finishing establishment for young ladies was located in a handsome large red-bricked building, of the William-and-Mary period, when it had been the mansion of some great nobleman, with an immensely fine peruke—a memorial of which, and of himself, had been left in a panel-painting in the dining-room, for which the auctioneer who dispersed the last heir’s inheritance had not been able to find a purchaser. I believe in consequence it went as a fixture, or, perhaps, was not reckoned at all; a point, however, which, although concerning a very great nobleman in his own day, may not be worth elucidating in ours. The mansion, become a seminary of polite acquirement, stood in its own “park-like grounds,”—that is, to-day it was surrounded by a space of about half an acre, which was prettily got up to look like a perfect elysium of girlish out-of-door exercise and recreation. There, at suitable hours, if admitted—for the walls were, of course, too high to be looked over—you might see the most delightful sylphide romps going on. In one direction half-a-dozen rosy, laughing, screaming, quarrelling, hugging girls tossed one another amazing and delirious heights on a swing. In another, some graceful creature balanced the Indian sceptre in a thousand attitudes for the sculptor, if sculptors troubled themselves in modern times to make marble easy and graceful. Here two pretty little creatures exchanged the flying hoop, or caught the

rapidly-falling ball, on principles of gravitation which the eldest Miss Sparx, who loved always to mix instruction with sport, often explained to the best of her own knowledge and unbelief. There was green grass below their feet, tall waving trees above those still happy though puzzled and befussed young heads—trees that had an indistinct recollection of having contemplated the diamond stomacher and belaced satin petticoat of Queen Anne. And there were little patches of mignonette and flowers, and two urns at the principal entrance, overflowing in long dishevelled verdure with creeping-jennies, like a drowned woman's tresses drawn from some oozy depth. So that on the whole the place looked very pleasant and secluded indeed, and much comforted the mothers who came to leave their daughters there; nay, awakened in some of them regrets that they could not stay behind out of the noisy, rattling, headlong world, instead of—or, at least, in company with—those beloved and cherished deposits. For a daughter must be valuable for whose education you are willing to give one hundred guineas per annum and extras—with as little trouble as possible, of course, to yourself.

But, indeed, we should be very long if we enlarged on all the advantages of the Sparx Gymgynæcium, at which every modern improvement had been so carefully introduced, and whence antiquated notions of all sorts had been so judiciously eliminated, that Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt more than once remarked to confidential pupils, with her Parisian shrug, that the proprietresses themselves seemed to be the only things a little behind the age. Still we may add, in general, that not a single moment which could possibly be devoted to enlightenment was neglected to be filled up. For example, when the young ladies sat at work in the evenings round the lamps in the great parlour, one of their number, agreeably to the custom of other monastic institutions, read aloud to the rest from some improving book. The subject did not matter much, provided it was treated in an agreeable and popular manner. Upon that point Miss Rosabella (whose duty it was to superintend these intervals of relaxation)

was rather fixed. The Reverend Jabez had simplified several sciences himself in this way, and had made them as light and easy for comprehension as a series of dissolving views. Wonderfully advanced our happier age is, in truth, in these latter respects, and greatly do our own surpass those stupid old prosy, matter-of-fact scientific works of former times; when, certainly, only persons of scientific pursuits and objects perused such treatises at all, about whom it was no matter how much duller and stupider they made themselves thereby.

Some such perusal was taking place on one occasion, when it may be as well to introduce the reader to the heroine of as strange and terrible a story—frivolous as the commencement of my narrative may seem to some readers—as ever essentialised, within the narrow circle of an individual career, the moral and condemnation of an age.

It was to the following effect, read in the bright, clear, rippling tones of a youthful female voice, tinged ever so slightly with a silver Doric; or, in unpoetical straightforward English, with a north-country Irish accent. For the fame of the Sparx Gymgynæcium was widely diffused, especially among the wealthy commercial classes of the three divisions of the United Kingdom, in consequence of a grand match made by one of the pupils almost directly after she left it. She married an earl nearly three times her age, and had a hundred thousand pounds left her by an uncle on that condition:—

“Arsenic, as we commonly call it—the white arsenic of the shops, and the arsenious acid of the chemist—is well known as a violent poison. Swallowed in large doses, it is what medical writers call an irritant poison. In very minute doses it is known to professional men as a tonic and alterative, and is sometimes administered with a view to these effects. It is remarkable also for exercising a peculiar influence upon the skin, and is therefore occasionally employed in cutaneous diseases. The use of arsenic, however, is unfrequent among regularly-educated practitioners, and it is never, I believe, used as a household medicine by the people.

“In some parts of Lower Austria, however, in Styria, and especially in the hilly country towards Hungary, there prevails among the common people an extraordinary custom of eating arsenic. During the smelting of lead, copper, and other ores, white arsenic flies off in fumes, and condenses in the solid form in the long chimneys which are usually attached to the smelting-furnaces. From these chimneys, in the mining regions, the arsenic is obtained, and is sold to the people by the itinerant pedlars and herbalists. It is known by the name of *Hidri* (a corruption of *Hutter-rauch*, smelting-house smoke), and the practice of using it is of considerable antiquity. By many it is swallowed daily throughout a long life, and the custom is even handed down hereditarily from father to son.

“Arsenic is thus consumed chiefly for two purposes—*first*, to give plumpness to the figure, cleanness and softness to the skin, and beauty and freshness to the complexion; *second*, to improve the breathing and give longness of wind, so that steep and continuous heights may be climbed without difficulty and exhaustion of breath. Both these results are described as following almost invariably from the prolonged use of arsenic either by man or by animals.

“For the former purposes, young peasants, both male and female, have recourse to it, with the view of adding to their charms in the eyes of each other; and it is remarkable to see how wonderfully well they attain their object, for those young persons who adopt the practice are generally remarkable for clear and blooming complexions, for full, rounded figures, and for a healthy appearance. Dr. Von Tschudi gives the following case as having occurred in his own medical practice: ‘A healthy, but pale and thin milkmaid, residing in the parish of H——, had a lover whom she wished to attach to her by a more agreeable exterior; she therefore had recourse to the well-known beautifier, and took arsenic several times a week. The desired effect was not long in showing itself; for in a few months she became stout, rosy-cheeked, and all that her lover could desire. In order, however, to increase the effect, she incautiously increased the doses of arsenic, and

fell a victim to her vanity. She died poisoned, a very painful death.' The number of such painful cases, especially among young persons, is described as by no means inconsiderable.

* * * * *

"The perusal of the above facts regarding arsenic—taken in connection with what has been previously stated as to the effects of the resin of hemp—recalls to our mind the dreamy recollections of what we have been accustomed to consider as the fabulous fancies of easy and credulous times. Love-philtres, charms, and potions start up again as real things beneath the light of advancing science. From the influence of hemp and arsenic no heart seems secure—by their assistance no affection unattainable. The wise woman, whom the charmless female of the East consults, administers to the desired one a philtre of hashish, which deceives his imagination—cheats him into the belief that charms exist, and attractive beauty, where there are none, and defrauds him, as it were, of a love which, with the truth before him, he would never have yielded. She acts directly upon his brain with her hempen potion, leaving the unlovely object he is to admire really as unlovely as before.

"But the Styrian peasant-girl, stirred by an unconsciously growing attachment—confiding scarcely to herself her secret feelings, and taking counsel of her inherited wisdom only—really adds, by the use of hidri, to the natural graces of her filling and rounding form, paints with brighter hues her blushing cheeks and tempting lips, and imparts a new and winning lustre to her sparkling eye. Every one sees and admires the reality of her growing beauty; the young men sound her praises, and become suppliants for her favour. She triumphs over the affections of all, and compels the chosen one to her feet.

"Thus even cruel arsenic, so often the minister of crime and the parent of sorrow, bears a blessed jewel in its forehead, and, as a love-awakener, becomes at times the harbinger of happiness, the soother of ardent longing, the bestower of contentment and peace!

"It is probable that the use of these and many other

love-potions has been known to the initiated from very early times—now given to the female to enhance her real charms—now administered to the lords of the creation, to add imaginary beauties to the unattractive. And out of this use must often have sprung fatal results,—to the female, as is now sometimes the case in Styria, from the incautious use of the poisonous arsenic ; to the male, as happens daily in the East, from the maddening effects of the fiery hemp. They must also have given birth to many hidden crimes, which only romance now collects and preserves—the ignorance of the learned having long ago pronounced them unworthy of belief.”

CHAPTER II.

APPLES ON THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

“THAT will do, my dear—very nicely read ; but you should have laid a more particular emphasis on the words *hemp* and *arsenic*, in the fifth section of the extract, as these words evidently give what we may call the dominating impulse to the ideas inculcated in all the succeeding portion,” said Miss Hortensia, who, as instructor in elocution, very properly attended only to the sound of what she heard.

“Oh, ain’t it funny that *hemp* and *arsenic* should go together ? for isn’t that what they hang people with, Miss Rosabella ?” inquired a lively young chit, of some fifteen or sixteen years of age, of the one of the Misses Sparx who, she thought, would appreciate a joke.

“With *arsenic*, my love ?” gravely rebuked Miss Hortensia, who always required a logical precision of expression in every body but herself.

“With *hemp*, my sweet child ? Hemp is a plant ; they do not hang people with plants. Go and bring the ‘Dictionary of Technological Terms’ out of my bedroom ; you will find it in the window, near my smelling-bottle, which you will easily see by the reticule with the steel clasps, beside it ; and read us the article,” said “Mother Minerva,” with all the solemnity of her favourite bird.

"Oh, I don't want to know, please, Miss Sparx,—I mean, I don't like going upstairs in the dark," humbly deprecated the offending Miss Emily Maughan.

Miss Rosabella had glanced at her favourite pupil with a significant sparkle in the eye. "Oh, never mind Emily's mistake, sister; you know it all comes to the same thing. Hemp makes rope, and they hang naughty people with rope, and that is what Emily meant to say," she kindly interposed, biting asunder a piece of the thread with which she was engaged in working one of the innumerable holes forming the pattern of a gorgeous *trousseau* under-garment—with her front teeth, in spite of repeated warnings from her elder sister of the danger of the practice. She had lost her own by it, Miss Susannah was wont to say, when she was quite a child, just as her hair had become gray at a supernaturally early period, by the incautious use of a certain pomade divine unskilfully prepared.

"But didn't you leave something out, Madeleine?" said another of the young ladies—a creature as fresh and rosy as a wild apple—to the one that had obliged the company by the perusal commented on. The latter had, meanwhile, been earnestly and thoughtfully reading over again to herself the "article."—So earnestly, indeed, that she took no notice of the question.

"Did you, Miss Graham—did you omit some portion of this valuable elucidation?" said Miss Hortensia, severely, discerning all the presumption of such an act of discretion.

"Sister means, did you skip any thing, Madeleine?" interpreted Miss Rosabella.

"No—yes, ma'am—yes, I did, because I saw it was nothing particular to read—only about the effect of arsenic in making people breathe better in going up hills. I did not think that was worth reading," the young lady replied, blushing very deeply, and she had already a colour as richly glowing and beautiful as the scarlet of sunrise on her fair, but rather sun-freckled, northern complexion.

"Why, that is most likely by far the best of it. I wonder you take upon you to select what we are to hear. Surely *we* are the best judges, Miss Madeleine Graham!" exclaimed Miss Sparx, who had been for some time

threatened with asthmatical symptoms—or fancied that she was; and, of the two, people are always the more thoroughly convinced of the existence of an imaginary than of a real disorder.

“Oh, I don’t think it is of much consequence, Susannah, to hear what effect arsenic has upon the breathing,” said Miss Rosabella, who was perfectly well, and sound as a bell, in her own chest.

“Put a lesson-keeper in the place, Miss Graham, and I will read it myself over again, by and by,” said Miss Sparx, with evidently offended dignity.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“What do you call the book, *ma chère*? Who is its writer?” now inquired Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt, with as much apparent interest, though possibly very differently awakened, as her principal exhibited.

“Professor Johnston’s ‘Chemistry of Common Life,’ Mademoiselle.”

“What is it he says—if you please to read again?—that this dangerous poison, it communicates a certain plumpness to the figure—a freshness and vivacity to the complexion otherwise impossible?” Mademoiselle pursued; who, it may be remarked, was herself in person of that kind and degree of Parisian *tournure* known as “scraggy” in England, and was, besides, of an unwholesome green-sallow complexion, touched with indigo under the eyes and in the corners of the mouth.

“Yes, he says that; but do you really think it would, Miss Sparx?” said Miss Graham, turning with something like interest—which was not often the case—to the principal of the seminary.

Miss Sparx opened her mouth to give utterance to an oracle, when Miss Rosabella glided in an interruption in her quiet way. “Why do you want to know, Madeleine?”

“Because—because, perhaps, in that case—it might remove *sun-freckles*,” that young person replied, half laughingly, and smoothing back in both hands the splendid masses of her glossy black hair, which was what is called “waved,” with the crisp of a natural curl rippling its whole length, without ever breaking into an overflow

until it was secured in a massive plait behind the head ; —“you see I have some.”

“I don’t advise you to try it, Madeleine, or it might remove the owner of the sun-freckles with them,” said Miss Rosabella, who had more practical good sense than all the rest of the teachers put together.

“I don’t suppose I could get any,” said Madeleine, regretfully.

“Will they not—do they not sell it at the pharmacien’s?” inquired Mademoiselle Olympe, as carelessly as she could.

“Yes ; if you go with a witness, Mademoiselle,” said Miss Rosabella, drily ; “and then, of course, people would wonder what you wanted with it : and it would be very nasty to take, I should think, mixed with soot, as the apothecaries are obliged, I believe.”

“Ah, without doubt !”

“It is not so bad as hashish, however,” said honest Emily Maughan.

“Why not, dear?” inquired Miss Rosabella.

“Oh, because didn’t the book say that hashish regularly cheats people into the belief that one’s a great deal handsomer than one is?—I don’t call that fair, Matty ; do you?” Emily replied, appealing in embarrassment to a still younger member of the society.

Mademoiselle Loriôt shrugged her lean shoulders, and looked at the English girl with contempt.

“Ah ! why, that is what is done always and every where. What folly ! How should we please without decoration, we poor women ? What are we but an illusion,—a vision of the imagination,—as but too plainly appears by the disenchantment when once we are attained ?”

“Don’t talk that way before the children, Mademoiselle ! And I must say I don’t think it very good taste at any time to let such things be known,” said Miss Rosabella sharply, and glancing from the French instructress with indignation to her own intended wedding-robe.

Another Parisian shrug, and a pause.

“What sort of stuff, I wonder, is *hashish*, then. It

isn't a mineral, is it, Miss Sparx?" resumed Madeleine, hoping by the reverential reference to obtain the principal's connivance to a renewal of the interesting subject.

"You are *doing* hashish there, Madeleine!" said Miss Rosabella, significantly.

The young girl blushed; the warm blood in those rapid coursing veins often sent a glow of the inward fire to the surface.

"Oh, is *hashish* what Elders the cook calls '*gammon*'? I heard her say so to a policeman the other night, that called to know if any body had got over the garden-wall," said Matty, or Miss Matilda Dollards, as was her proper name.

"Very like it, at all events, I should say. But it's all stuff o' nonsense; there's no such thing in reality at all; they only put it in books to amuse people."

Miss Rosabella thus endeavoured to pooh-pooh away the impression which she saw made on the minds of her young charges, and shortly after ordered in the bread-and-butter, and dismissed the company to bed.

CHAPTER III.

CONFIDENCES.

TAP! tap!

"Good heavens! Oh, is it only you, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes, yes; it is only your poor Olympe, my dear child. And it is not in the least necessary to extinguish before me the amicable light of your furtive taper."

The scene is now Miss Madeleine Graham's little exclusive bed-chamber—or that ought to have been so, according to the extra charged in her school-account. But Mademoiselle Loriôt, who had taken the young girl into particular friendship and confidence, and delighted in making her the depository of the craving and morbid fancies and projects which haunted her own imagination, not unfrequently took upon her to break through the rules

of the seminary by spending many an hour and half-hour, much better devoted to refreshing slumbers, in her favourite's apartment of a night. The clandestine character of these visits, and implied violation of the decrees of authority, were possibly their greatest charm and attraction for both Madeleine and the Parisienne.

It was a very pretty little virginal chamber this, and one would as little have expected to find Evil squatting beside that light snowy-curtained couch, relieved by rose-like festoons of pink-calico, amid the quiet environments of a young girl's toilette and bedroom furniture, as under the green glistening of the trees of Paradise, amid its flowery turf. Yet there she seated herself now, in the outward presentment of Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt, while the young proprietress of the chamber, who was in bed, reading a book in a yellow cover, by the forbidden light of a small wax taper set in a washing-basin (for safety's sake!) on the counterpane, extended her hand to the sympathetic pressure of her Parisian friend.

"What is the matter to-night, dear Olympe? And are you sure that Miss Rosabella (I know the other two are safe enough) will take no notice of your not being in your own room?"

"I have taken precautions against that peril. I have locked the door, and brought away the key in my pocket. If Miss Rosabella takes it into her head to be curious, she may perhaps try the lock, when she will be satisfied that I am within; and even for me not to reply will be to her the assurance that I am in my bed and asleep. We have only to preserve a cautious undertone. But I confess that I found it impossible, dear Madeleine, to endure the solitude of my own thoughts after the recollections aroused by the recent discussion over our work, when, by a rare weakness, Miss Rosabella permitted us for once to speak on subjects interesting in any degree to humanity—to the humanity of women, at all events."

"But are you sure you shut the door behind you? If she should be listening!"

"Oh yes, oh yes. Do you think I have forgotten the proverb that even walls have ears, dear child? But of

what do you talk when you expose yourself to so much more risk, and your poor attached friend also, by presuming to read this interesting book, which I have lent you at an hour when it is by no means impossible the restless genius of Miss Rosabella may be in activity still in the corridors of the house? And, you know, none of the pupils is permitted to have her door locked against her importunate scrutiny," said Mademoiselle, glaring suspiciously around, and in the operation looking not altogether a bad resemblance to the most impressive hero, at all events of Milton's epic, when he went prospecting round the adamantine hedges of Eden on emerging from Chaos.

"Oh, but I have taken care of all that; I have calculated to a nicety where to put this basin, with a light in it, on the bed, so that the shadow extends below the door; and if I heard the slightest sound—and you know what a sharp, rattling footstep Miss Rosabella has—I should out with it in a puff," the apt pupil replied.

"How far have you got in your book, my dear little cabbage?—*mon cher petit chou*?"

"To such an interesting point; where Marguerite Gautier makes up her mind to go back to her old way of living in Paris, you know, and accept the offer of that booby Count N——, whom she disliked so much in reality, rather than bring her lover into any farther trouble with his family," replied the young girl.

The work to which she was devoting her midnight taper would thus appear to have been the extremely improving *Dame aux Camélias*, of the younger Dumas; a story which, however, it must be admitted, under the still more fearless designation of *La Traviata*, has stirred the sympathies of all the civilised operatic nations, in behalf of a species of heroine, bare allusion to whose social existence and position would have emptied a drawing-room full of our grandmothers.

"Ah, indeed, so far? But we devour words when they agree with us—I mean when it is pleasant reading. Ah, and is it not an ennobling and beautiful spectacle, dear Madeleine, to behold motives so generous and disin-

terested dominating in the heart of a woman of a caste which society entertains in its breast only to conceal and reprobate, as one might a cancer gnawing into the flesh, and yet who exhibits herself capable of such sublime disinterestedness and devotion as to relinquish the man she loves rather than conduct him to ruin? Ah! what good woman—what perfectly *good woman*—as they are called,” Mademoiselle Olympe concluded, with a passionate sneer, “would be capable of conduct at once so exalted and incomprehensible by mean and routine souls?”

Mademoiselle, it was evident, asked the question as if instituting a psychological inquiry into the motives and conduct of an actual personage, and by no means a creation of the diseased imagination and sympathies of *la jeune France* under the second empire.

“Do you think it is really the case then, Olympe, that good women hardly ever do any thing good—of that kind, I mean? But then they haven’t much opportunity; they are mostly so quietly at home, with husbands and children of their own. Still, I can’t help thinking,” Madeleine continued, rather hesitatingly, “that young Mr. Dumas has made a mistake in the account he gives of his heroine, and that, in reality, she—she left Armand because she was tired of having nothing to live upon, and pawning her clothes, and having to part with her—her brougham, I suppose; *coupé* the Frenchman calls it. Don’t you think, now, if it is a true story—and even Monsieur Jules Janin, in his preface, seems to say it is—that I am a good deal more likely to be right than—yes, than the author man himself that tells what happened?”

“In effect,” replied Mademoiselle, after a brief pause, and seeming to recognise a still more advanced *esprit* to her own in a pupil, “it does seem improbable to incredulity that the most extinct of all the noble illusions of our ancestors—a love altogether superior to and that triumphs over the miserable motives of self-interest and gratification—could have fled from every other human heart to take refuge in that of a vile—but I must not use the expression; and what need of severe expressions when we are understood?”

"And somebody might hear, Mademoiselle, if you raise your voice so much above your breath. But do you really think people are all so very bad and greedy nowadays—women and all?" said Madeleine, raising herself, with evidently awakened interest, on her rounded elbow on the pillow.

"Women *above* all! Yes, certainly; and what do you expect? That we alone are to preserve the absurd traditions of the senseless infancy of the world in the midst of the universal raging of cupidity and self-interest, which presents to us every where the most degrading, and yet fascinating, spectacles of success and enjoyment? When examples of the preference *men* give to material interests over every other force upon us almost the conviction that the constitution of the human mind and heart are changed, and that the foundations of all our modern forms of society are yielding to the incessant action of a principle sprung from the abyss, but which is fast becoming the sole motive power of our age."

"You mean people being all so fond of money, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes, certainly; what else should I mean?"

"Well, but," remonstrated the young girl, who showed herself to be more than ever of her epoch, "what can one possibly do without money, Olympe? Don't money buy every thing one sees or knows of worth having? All the fine clothes, horses, carriages, plate, jewels, furniture—even the homage and respect which you put in our exercises—ought only to be paid to virtue and noble qualities of the mind? But don't we see quite different with our own eyes, and even in this narrow enclosure of a school? I am sure there could not be a better woman in the world than Madame Fürschener, for example; and I think you are yourself one of the most talented persons in your intellects that can be imagined; but I should very much like to know when and where either of you will attract so much notice and respect as that dashing woman of the *demi-monde* you pointed out to me the other day in the Park Road, and who, you say, is quite famous in the newspapers, under the name—if one may call it so, and de-

scription some very clever person has given of her—of Incognita.”

“Very true—very true. Yes, you are right, my dear Madeleine; and this is not the age in which to exhibit, on a stage which laughs at you, the example of virtues as obsolete as the sacques and furbelows of a bygone epoch.”

“And yet I think I should not like to marry altogether for *money*, Olympe. I think I should like to like the person a little that I married,” said Madeleine, a soft rosiness—a faint reminiscence of antique British maidenly sentiment and delicacy, possibly—rising over the snowy, Hebe-like swell of the shoulder and youthful bosom, displayed in the careless grace of the young girl’s attitude, as she sat with her elbow propped on the pillow, and her cambric night-clothes dispersed like a semi-transparent mist over all that loveliness which, it seemed, was to be marketed like any other goods.

“That you *married*—the *person* that you married? You forget, my poor child,” said Mademoiselle Loriôt, surveying the fair young creature attentively, “that you are not to marry so much a person as certain social advantages, which are comprised under the expression, wealth, position—perhaps rank and power; for you are very beautiful, dearest Madeleine! And if you mount to the height of the elevation of your age, above the insidious suggestions of passion and feeling, to which, nevertheless, your organisation exposes you, I am persuaded you will make one of the best of British matches, and will be enabled to exhibit to those who have loved you so sincerely, like your poor Olympe, marks of a generosity which I have always contended is natural to the goodness of your heart.”

“I shall certainly try and marry a rich man, Olympe. I don’t think I care much for rank or power,” said Madeleine Graham.

“Not for power even?” returned the Parisienne, with a momentary but quickly-suppressed quiver of contempt over her facial lines. “Ah, well, it is an indifference easily accounted for; you spring from a rich commercial family, to which, above all things, the possession of *wealth* must seem the most honourable and desirable.”

"Papa is very well off: but then there are a good number of us, boys and all, to be provided for. I don't suppose I shall have much of a fortune, unless I look after myself," replied this prescient and considerative young girl of the nineteenth century.

"And you may be assured, dearest Madeleine, of a triumphant issue to your efforts to place yourself, with those charms, that beauty, that indescribable fascination, which accompany all you say and do, and which attract, as it were by an irresistible loadstone, all who enter into your sphere. Even the eldest Miss Sparx—she whom nothing else pleases—I notice that she occasionally regards you with an expression of complacency."

"No—come, Olympe, I can't quite believe *that!*" laughed the young girl; "but of course I must depend chiefly on looking well and attracting people, to get well married; and that is why I take such pains with my accomplishments, and all that. I don't care much about what Mother Minerva calls furnishing one's head *inside*. I say, Olympe, wouldn't it save a world of trouble if one could only dose the men with lots of that same hashish we were talking about in the parlour before supper?"

"Without concerning ourselves that it is said to make madmen and delirious idiots of them afterwards, eh, *ma chère?*"

Mademoiselle Loriôt spoke these words in a tone that startled Madeleine herself; especially as she followed up the observation with a strangely discordant, and indeed horrid and menacing, kind of a choked giggle.

"How you do talk against the men sometimes, Olympe! One would think that they had bitterly wronged you—some of them. And yet you are quite young still; you are not an old maid at all, I am sure," she said soothingly.

"I am, nevertheless, one of the victims of my age!" replied Mademoiselle with unflagging exasperation. "You see me here, earning a miserable pittance on which to support existence—an existence which annoys, frets, wearies me, but which I have not the courage to terminate as yet. I am not destitute of talents; I can sing—

I dance to admiration ; I have read all Racine, and a part of Corneille, and I profess my language with a skill that excites admiration. I am not, perhaps, regularly beautiful ; but my complexion has a certain pallor and sensibility not without its charm. I have a heart of a grandeur and infinity of sentiment altogether inexhaustible, were I required to love all the men of my epoch. Figure to yourself, then, my dear Madeleine, that I have heaped all these treasures of my affections and talents on a single individual ; that this individual is a miserable *commis-voyageur* of a Lyons silk-house, endowed only with a fine figure, and a face which attracts the eye by the porcelain beauty and clearness of the complexion ; that this *commis-voyageur* is a creature almost destitute of soul and sensibility, with only intellect sufficient to make a happy selection in the colours of a necktie and waistcoat. Put, I say, all these ideas and convictions together, and know, in conclusion, that I have thrown myself at the feet of this man, to implore a return of devotion, and that he has rejected me!—rejected *me*, merely because I had not twenty-thousand francs : at which price only he has caused himself to be inscribed, to my certain knowledge, in the registry of all the matrimonial agencies both at Paris and Lyons.”

Miss Graham, it must be confessed, nearly burst out laughing at this exposition of her friend's unhappy position ; but she controlled her very natural tendency to merriment, and merely remarked, “Well, you know, I am to go home to my native city at the end of this quarter. There are plenty of rich men there, Olympe ; and I will at least try to secure myself one of the number ; and then I will invite you to stay with me a good long while, and I will introduce you to somebody very well off, whom you will easily be able to take in with your talents and accomplishments, and you shall be married near me, and we shall be both so happy, you know ; and if you kill yourself at all, it shall only be by living too well.”

“Embrace me, my dear child ! You give me new hope—new life !”

While this ceremony was being performed, Mademoi-

selle Olympe's vision was crossed by a dim notion that she might some day be enabled to figure in her young friend's household in that favourite character of modern French romance, in which the beloved female inmate and confidante supplants her benefactress and entertainer in the affections of her husband and all about her, and winds up the whole creditable affair by causing the wife to be expelled in shame and disgrace from his roof and hearth ; mostly, however, with considerable justification on the part of the unhappy lady herself, it must be confessed.

Fortunately, the antidotes of most poisons grow beside them. Miss Graham had also perused many of these edifying works, lent to her for private relaxation by her kind friend and tutoress ; and even as she uttered the invitation, she secretly came to the conclusion that Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt was just the kind of personage to play a benefactress and entertainer a trick of the kind, and was therefore, possibly, not so desirable an inmate as to render it wholly out of the question to devise an excuse for *not* receiving her as such, when the proper time should arrive.

After a properly enthusiastic outward demonstration of these inward sentiments and reflections between the Parisienne and her youthful pupil (Madeleine was not quite eighteen), the latter withdrew herself with a kind smile, but a little wearied and embarrassed with the excess of the demonstration on her friend's part, from her fond arms.

"There, that is enough, dear Olympe. You know that I do not in the least doubt your affection for me ; and some of the best proofs of it, I think, you have given me in these amusing books you lend me. But to resume the real subject—about that Incognita, you know—must not some one be at a tremendous expense with her ?"

"No doubt, no doubt ; a hundred times as much as he would pay for a wife."

"Oh, how wicked ! Do you know who it is ?"

"I have a guess that would prove formidable in a court of justice ; but should we tell it to a young girl ?"

said Mademoiselle Loriôt, after—let us do her the justice to say so—a considerable pause.

Apparently she decided in the affirmative.

“Yes; but he is not at all—what you call it, among you, you natives of the glorious Albion?—not at all a—*a marrying man*.”

“Why not?” said Madeleine.

“Why not? Is it proper, again I say to myself, to explain himself to her? Why not? Let us no longer delude ourselves with phrases concerning the innocent candour, not to be profaned, of the youth of our days. *Parlons toute nette!* For the very reason, my child, that he is the most proper for matrimony, being so immensely rich; but he therefore supposes himself incapable of inspiring an attachment worthy of so great a sacrifice. Do you not comprehend? It is a man of an original character, and he cannot support the notion to be loved for his money alone. Ha! ha! what a ridiculous vanity in a man, who is far from being young, and who ought to be aware that at his age one is chiefly loved for the benefits he confers!”

“But is he so very rich?”

“Horribly, my dear.”

“Do you know *who* he is?—*what* he is called?”

“He is an enormous merchant of London—a man who deals with the two worlds; one may say that he is even of a certain rank, since his father purchased a patent of German nobility. He is past the prime of existence; he is in some measure bald; he has little charm of manner or conversation; he is stern, unbending.”

“What is his name, Olympe—dear Olympe?”

“Behringbright. He is called Mr. Baron Behringbright.”

“Wouldn't *he* be a good match, Olympe?”

“Good to an impossibility of being better, my dear one.”

“But it would be, of course, impossible. I don't suppose there would be any way of getting at him?”

“Not likely. Miss Rosabella almost always promenades with us in the parks; and, besides, how could we

convince him of the falsehood, the treason of the creature he enables to live with so much splendour?"

"But *is* she false? *is* she treasonable?"

"What matters either? But she is both. I could say what I know—only I will not."

"Olympe, we will talk more about this another time. But are we quite safe now, do you think? Did you not hear something very like a footstep outside the door?"

"But no, it is impossible."

"We are very fanciful in my country; at least we used once to be, in the time of Shakspeare and Lady Macbeth. And now I thought I heard a deep sigh, as if some person was very unhappy!" said Madeleine, who was contriving a means to get rid of her visitor, and now affected to look startled. "Do you believe in guardian angels, Olympe? Well, I really thought I heard *my* guardian angel give—a deep sigh."

"Oh, what folly!" said Mademoiselle Olympe, but with visible alarm; being, like most persons who have entirely emancipated their minds from superstition, very superstitious.

"I daresay it is so. Still, Olympe, I wish you would go to your own bed to-night! I should like to reflect on all you have said."

"Good-night, then, dear Madeleine."

"Good-night, my kind instructress! Good-night!"

"What a splendid thing it would be," thought Madeleine Graham, left at last alone, "if one could only get to love a man who had plenty of money! How nice it would be to conciliate the two views! I should positively adore a man whom I loved who had money! But this one is oldish and rather bald, they say; a man of a cold, repulsive, almost of an insulting, character, whom one could not persuade that one loved for himself, from being aware that there was nothing lovable in him, and would always be imagining his purse assailed.—Still, it is the difficulty of the task, after all, that makes the fun of it! There would be no great wonder or merit in coaxing a young, vehement, *Nouvelle-Héloïse* sort of a lover into the belief that one loved him. I'll get Olympe to make inquiries—

and she already knows a great deal more than she has told me, I am sure. How queer, too, that this Behringbright man does not in the least believe in the woman upon whom he heaps all the treasures of his unbounded wealth, according to Olympe! Oh, what strange creatures men and women are!—Well, I should like to see this Behringbright—this terribly rich man! I wonder whether I could like his money well enough to—to—to sacrifice a fervent young lover to his riches—if I had one?"

CHAPTER IV.

CAUSES AND EFFECTS.

"I SAY, Fauntleroy—Vivian, my boy—who's Incognita?"

"Who's who?"

"Oh, you know who I mean."

"You should ask Behringbright; I daresay it costs him something handsome per annum to be in the secret. Let me see. A villa in Regent's Park; an open and a close carriage; lots of servants; a box at the Opera; all the spectacles, flower-shows, exhibitions; Brighton and Paris at the proper seasons; dress, jewelry, and other knick-knacks: I should think she stands him in some seven or eight thousand pounds a year, this particular Anno Domini of ours," summed up Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy, at intervals of the puffs of a cigar which he was smoking, extended almost at full length on one of the divans of the smoking-room of the — Club,—or stay, as it is rather old-fashioned to leave blanks, let us call it the Dolce-far-Niente Club.

"Bless me! And that's the tremendously rich fellow—the millionaire fellow, don't they call them?—that's so set his mind against being married for his money; isn't it, Vivian?" drawled another of the loungers, keeping his eyes closed, in the full beatitude of his narcotic enjoyment, like a Chinese in a stage of *bang*.

"Against being *married* for his money!" returned Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy, with a long emphasis on the word.

"One don't mind the other sort of affair, you know, for one's money; it's fair bargain and sale. But Behring-bright can't take kindly to the notion of being rated as a mere money-bag in so important and lasting a business as matrimony; and that's how he gives all the dowagers and Lady Claras the slip, and rushes free in the prairies yet, in spite of all the silken lassos thrown at his neck."

"He isn't at all a handsome fellow, and that is how he finds the women out, and what they're after," returned the drawler, the Honourable Francis Dundreary, M.P. for Slopsley, in Worcestershire, who *was* a handsome fellow—a most decidedly handsome fellow, if faultless features, a faultless moustache, and faultless tailors and bootmakers, can make a man so.

"Oh, nobody cares for *beauty* now. The women are like every body else—all for themselves, and looking after the main chance; and quite right too," observed a third speaker and smoker, the second son of a good family, who managed to cut a pretty decent appearance, *as a single man*, on five-hundred a-year; but, of course, never dreamed of such an imprudence as matrimony upon that income.

"I wonder the dowagers and Lady Claras, as you call them, can take any notice of a man like that—of no birth whatever," said Lord Ronald Macdonald, a Caledonian duke's ninth son, and with a portion accordingly; not to mention that he was endowed with all the extravagance and love of expense which might have become the head of the family, in case that dignitary had felt inclined to ruin himself.

"No birth! Why, how do you think he's alive then?"

"Oh, nonsense! you know what I mean."

"Of course; any fellow can tell what he means," softly ejaculated the Honourable Francis.

"Well, whether he was ever born or no—I mean, whether he's got birth or not—he's a most tremendously rich individual, and he's quite in the right to think the fine ladies are after him chiefly for that—and to cut them, and take up with Incognita," said Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy, with unusual earnestness for him—an earnestness founded on unhappy experiences, for he had been jilted not so long

before—poor fellow!—for the sake of a man who had a good deal more money. In fact, Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy had hardly any, and had only been introduced into good society at all—and all manner of expenses he could not afford—by the brilliant success of a satirical novel he had written, and which ridiculed his best friends in such a delightful manner, that every body read it and abused it. This advanced him, so that he was enabled to join a first-rate club, keep a horse and a natty little groom, and smoke Latakia, for one year on his own means; all the rest of his time he lived on loans and the means of other people, on condition that he rendered himself generally agreeable; and the proper way to do that was to be generally malicious, and say all kinds of cutting, ill-natured, and unfounded things, as foreign to the poor man's own nature as to the reality of the questions he treated.

"Is Incognita—a—a nithe girl?" said Mr. Dundreary.

"She's a spanker. Didn't you see how she drove those horses? I expected nothing but that she would have killed half-a-dozen people between Hyde Park Corner and her own delightful residence," said Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy.

"I tried to keep up with her, to see where she was going, but she went ahead at such a horrible rate I could not keep pace with her at all!" spasmodically interjected the Honourable Francis.

"Would she have made you welcome, do you think, Mr. Dundreary—as, of course, it's only money she's at present attached to—in case you had been able to *go the pace?*" said Mr. Vivian, with a bitter smile.

"Aw—aw, I daresay; Behringbright's nothing particular, every body knows, to doat upon."

"Isn't he monstrously rich?" puffed in a man who, up to this time, had remained in an apparent state of insensibility, crouched in an arm-chair, with his feet mounted on the back of one before him.

"As rich as a Jew. Some people say *he is* one," replied Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy, who, in point of fact, had some considerable occasion to know that Mr. Behringbright *was* as rich as a Jew.

"But as generous as a Christian," interjected another

somnolocutist, half opening his eyes, with a significant look in them, at that gentleman.

"I don't know what you mean by a Christian, nowadays," said Mr. Vivian, very drily, after a pause.

"I mean a man that lends you money when nobody else will," continued the remorseless sleeper-awakened.

Mr. Fauntleroy did not deign any comment on such a nonsensical observation.

"I say, Vivian, what *sort* of a rich man is Behring——what is the other part? I never remember a man's name that don't sound as if one knew it—Behringbrights?"

"Behringbright, Lord Ronald."

"Well, what is he—Barringlight—what d'y'e call him?—A drysalter?"

"A drysalter! Perhaps—among the rest. Deals in every thing, from a pin to an anchor. He is one of the greatest merchants this country ever produced—he and his brothers are. You don't mean to say, Lord Ronald, you don't know who George Cocker Behringbright is?"

"Every body knowths," lisped Mr. Dundreary. "How thilly of Macdonald to pretend not to. That would have done long ago, but it isn't the sort of thing nowadays. Besides, isn't he a baron or something of that sort, Vivian?"

"Yes, but he won't be called so. It isn't his fault; it was his father's, who couldn't help being a baron, in consequence of a few acres he bought of the Holy Roman Empire, I don't know how long ago. But he hates to be called 'Baron;' you can't offend him worse. He is Mr. Behringbright *pur et simple*, to all intents and purposes."

"What a stupid fellow!" said Lord Ronald Macdonald, with an exceedingly liquid *u*, to distinguish himself from the people who say "stoopid." "If I were he, I should like, above all things, to be a baron, and to *sink the shop*."

"Oh no; he treads on Plato's pride with greater pride! He's the kind of man that, if he can't be all, don't care to be any thing. I suppose he wouldn't mind being a British peer; but he don't care to be a Roman baron," said Mr. Fauntleroy, rather enjoying the surprise of the Scotch duke's ninth son.

"Why don't he *buy* himself a peerage, then?" said a person who had not hitherto spoken, but was tranquilly inhaling his cigar in a remote corner of the chamber, and who had natural tendencies to sarcasm against the aristocracy, he being the representative of an exceedingly democratic London constituency, that derived its chief employment and sustenance from manufactures that supplied aristocratic wants.

"*Buy* a peerage, sir!" exclaimed Lord Ronald Macdonald.

"He wouldn't take the trouble. Elections *are* such a bore, and I don't suppose he could manage a peerage under three or four regular votes," said Mr. Vivian.

People laughed, and seemed gratified—particularly the member for the democratic constituency, who had set his heart on at least a baronetcy.

There was now a pause, during which the curling vapours of the fumigation increased in volume, and floated in soft visionary mists high in the upper air of the divan; in the midst of which the person spoken of entered the smoking-room of the Dolce-Far-Niente Club.

CHAPTER V

GEORGE COCKER BEHRINGBRIGHT, WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN
BARON BEHRINGBRIGHT IF HE HAD CHOSEN.

I FLATTER myself, as the saying is—though probably, like most other people who say so, I flatter myself that I do *not* flatter myself—that I know as well as any of my brother, or even sister novelists, what manner of man the hero of a romance ought to be; and perhaps it would be enough for me to deny—as with great truth I can—that this romance is a romance, to be excused the necessity of playing the Frankenstein to a suitable figurant of the kind on these boards. And inasmuch as, moreover, my hero is not a hero, I may claim increased rights of exemption. But I should wish it to be clearly demonstrated that it is

not for want of knowing better that I persist in describing persons and events as they actually were and came to pass.

It may suffice for this purpose if I give a faint sketch of the properties which I know go to make up a personage of the nature omitted in this story. I know, for example, that the hero of a romance ought to be of a "noble stature;" that is to say, something between a giant and a man; or, to bring the notion to the level of the most ordinary capacity, of the average height of a Royal Life-Guardsman—blue or red, don't matter for the colour—dismounted from his charger, and employed in condescending parley with a nursery-maid and a perambulator. I know that he ought to be of "a pale, intellectual complexion;" and that his hair should cluster in glossy masses of "raven blue-black" around his manly forehead; should define his scarlet upper-lip, and, according to the present fashion, hang from his chin in a magnificent Arab sheik-like beard to his waist. His eyes should be of a "rich hazel brown, full of fire and tenderness," excepting when he was sunk in deep melancholy over the reflection that he should not see the heroine of the story again for a good number of intervening chapters. He ought to be dressed in the best black broadcloth from head to foot, save where a fine white-linen shirt-front should be displayed, projecting in graceful puffs over that tortured seat of sensibility, his breast—like the ornamental cut paper on a fire-grate in summer. The wrists of this shirt ought to be uncommonly long, though not so long as to conceal the superior length of the taper fingers. These taper fingers are, according to the modern novelist, the most indubitable proof of the hero's aristocratic descent; for, 'tis said, it takes three generations of *doing nothing* to make an aristocratic hand; and it is no longer permitted to establish the position without farther trouble by letting the nails grow too long to render any species of work possible—which was the right thing once upon a time. Finally, I know that a genuine hero's boots should be of *lustrous leather*, and of the best Parisian make, in order that he may be a hero even to his *valet de chambre*—a race of people said to be

more insensible than gravediggers themselves to the claims of exalted humanity over its fellows.

Thus much to show that it is not through ignorance on the present writer's part, but through the necessity of painting an actual man as he actually is, that I introduce George Cocker Behringbright to the reader's notice under outward presentments extremely unlike the *beau idéal* here liberally thrown in gratis.

He was a man, I regret to say, very like other men who are not peers of this realm ; which makes a great difference, of course, in every thing. He was neither tall nor short, nor fat nor lean, but he had good shoulders, and stood stoutly on his lower limbs, as if it would not be easy to knock him off them ; he had a head and face like a vast number of other heads and faces of British manufacture, which you may see every day, in any number, passing from east to west, or from west to east, as the case may happen, under Temple Bar ; thinking hard, but not otherwise meaning any particular harm to any person or thing. A head that was of good size ; not too big, but with ample space in the upper region for the brains—a space perhaps becoming a little too conspicuous through the slightly grizzled and originally sandy-brown, short-cut hair. For Mr. Behringbright had not fallen into the taste of the times for hirsute embellishment, and even his chin was as smoothly shaven as a grenadier's of His Majesty King George III. Not that he was so old as to be necessarily bigoted as to his hair ; indeed, in spite of the opinions of friends, I doubt if he was quite forty yet. But it may be, through one of those mistakes into which we are all liable to fall, Mr. Behringbright thought he should look younger without so venerable an appendage as a long beard ; forgetful that Fashion is always young, even when she powders her locks in complaisance to an old king, grown gray in the service. Or perhaps—and this is a good deal likelier than our other conjectures—he would not take the trouble to be of the mode, which, it is well known, in its earlier stages, requires a considerable recess from society before one can emerge with the rudiments of all one's future honours, in some luxuriance of growth, to

receive the surprised and occasionally ironical congratulations of one's friends and intimates.

To continue this authentic description : no sculptor would have selected Mr. Behringbright's visage as a model of manly beauty. But many persons might have recognised in that face the unmistakable indications of manly good sense, calmness of nerve and steadiness of judgment. George Behringbright looked the kind of man people would like to be near if they were in a steamboat on fire in the middle of the Atlantic, or in the thick of a railway collision in a tunnel. There was something at once so deliberate, firm, and tranquilly sagacious in the cut of the middle-sized, sober, projecting nose, the steadily-set lips, the high, unwrinkled, but easily-compressing forehead, which looked as if it mastered its ideas at a crunch. Not that you would, if a skilful physiognomist, have accepted this man as a person possessed of decidedly comfortable hardness of mind or heart ; on the contrary, there was something in the turned-down corners of the mouth,—in the sensitive and rather shrinking glance of those clear gray eyes,—that spoke of one who had been capable of great sufferings, and might be capable of more, but would rather not put himself in the way of having to endure them. A man *blasé* by being ill-used rather than ill-using, but who had had enough of the sort of thing, and intended, if possible, to pass the remainder of his days peacefully. A man, nevertheless, whose remains of youth and original warmth and earnestness of the passions,—it was likely enough,—inclined him to wish to enjoy himself, having ample means, if money be the means, to that end. Heaven knows why this man had ever allowed his name to be sullied by its union with that of the daring and disgraceful creature whom the profligates and fools of that day had agreed to call Incognita.

It would be a wonderful long story to try and explain an anomaly so startling in the character of a sober London merchant of the nineteenth century altogether to the satisfaction of the extremely rational, and, of course, unfailingly consistent reader ; but Mr. Behringbright's personal history might, perhaps, throw some gleams of illumination on the

subject, and therefore we may as well introduce a slight sketch of it in this place.

George Cocker Behringbright was the eldest of the three sons of an immensely rich capitalist, who had risen, by all accounts, *from nothing*—mushroom like—under the sulphureous mists of the last great European war; but who much more probably was descended, as he himself always would have it, from a diamond-merchant of Amsterdam of the same name, who, at the period of the *real* French Revolution, thought proper to pass over into England with his treasures, and there turned them to far better account, in the way of banking and loan-mongering.

The son of this Amsterdam diamond-merchant—become English, like most of us, by the circumstance of being born in England—also married an English wife, who allied the somewhat dull and lethargic blood of his ancestry with the Saxon-mettled and thoroughly native fluid in the veins of a Miss Smith, of Oaklands, in Surrey, whose father had also risen to a high rank in the moneyed aristocracy of the country by his own exertions. George Cocker, as I have before mentioned, was the eldest result of this alliance; and he was carefully trained, from his childhood upwards, in all the family faiths and traditions, with the view of his becoming, in his turn, the head of the great hereditary mercantile firm which, under his sires, had held a foremost place among the richest and most powerful of the trading sea-kings of England.

At the same time his father—or possibly rather his mother, since it is a kind of ambition that runs very strongly in the Smith family—was desirous that the son should be qualified for a higher position in “society” than the parents had ever been able to achieve, in so aristocratic a commercial country, by mere force of money alone. Mrs. Behringbright wished that the representative of the house should take rank also as a gentleman, and become, perhaps, a Member of Parliament, and a person of consequence in the Legislature; always, it may be, with an eye to business: for if money is power, so is power money—in certain cases not unknown to political and financial interweavings even in these virtuous times of our own.

Accordingly, George Cocker Behringbright received what is called a first-class university education, but he did not exhibit the least liking or attraction towards the more exalted destinies in contemplation for him : on the contrary, he continued of shy and reserved manners ; spoke his mind honestly when he did speak, but abhorred speechifying and all other occasions of public and personal display ; neither did he ever exhibit any keen relish or profound perception in political matters, but rather disliked and shunned them, particularly when women talked about them,—and State policy was his mother's favourite hobby. She was democratically inclined, as was natural in a Smith who intended her eldest son for a lord, and kept up a continual croak out of some of the newspapers on the faults of the administration. On the other hand, Mr. Behringbright never pretended to any special airs of his own, but gave in to commerce, and very evidently took as hearty and sincere an interest in following in the steps of his ancestors, as if those footsteps had led to the clouds.

I do not say what might have happened, considering the natural contrariety of humanity, if Mr. Behringbright had been commanded by his parents, and entreated by his family in general, to become what he made himself. He might very possibly then have turned his attention another way ; but as it was, even his mother was at last obliged to give him up as a hopeless case for political eminence, and to relinquish her intention of sending him into Parliament on the opposition benches, and thence, by an easy leap, into the Upper House. She gave him up as a person who was only born to sustain the commercial status of the family, and most determinedly exhibited his ancestral phlegm and perseverance in going the ways his ancestors had always gone.

Upon this the Baroness—for such George Cocker Behringbright's mother had now constituted herself, in despair at her eldest son's stupidity—baroness, one may almost say, in her own right, for the intervention of her husband was not to be counted for much, and she wore the title on her cards in no less defiance of him than of the Heralds' College of London—the Baroness Behring-

bright, who was a notable woman in all respects, and perceived that no better could be done, set to work in another direction, to regulate her eldest son's career to his advantage.

Not a *marrying man* indeed, Mademoiselle Olympe! How could you expect it? Why, the poor man had already been married once!

"*Marié et bien marré, ma foi!*" as a great wit could not help observing of another party two hundred years ago, just as great wits of the present day cannot avoid running occasionally into the same "confluent small-pox" of words.

"*Marié et bien marré.*"

The Baroness's only brother had left an only daughter, heiress to all his wealth, which was not very greatly inferior in amount to the accumulations of the Behringbright family itself. Nothing had all along annoyed the Baroness more than the notion of those riches passing out of her own family, to which she always believed it legitimately belonged. And now nothing could appear plainer sailing, or more directly pointed out by the finger of destiny, than that the eldest son of the rich Behringbrights should marry his cousin, the wealthy heiress of the Smiths.

This was not so difficult an enterprise as to make a successful politician of a quiet, honest, kind-hearted young man, brave as a lion in one sense, timorous as a hare in another, and who could not, or would not, make a speech in public for his life. George Cocker was still very young when his mother took him in hand this way: he was willing to oblige her in any way he could; he was of a nature peculiarly open to feminine influences in all its details; and in spite of his outward Dutch phlegm, and the difficulty of stirring his passions alight, his soul was honey-combed with fire, and easily yielded sparks to the stroke, or even the touch, in those days, if subtly applied. Heaven knows what might have come of it, if the air had been admitted into that whole glowing subterrene, and fanned that hidden mass of igneous matter to a furnace glow!

Miss Abella Smith, the heiress, and Behringbright's cousin, was not, however, exactly the kind of agent to

effect this result ; and it is very possible G. C. Behring-bright might have gone to his grave, like a great many other people, entirely ignorant of the mightier suppressed energies in his own nature, but for a series of events and consequences which make what is called among men the Chances of Life, and among the supernals, Destiny.

In point of fact, Miss Abella Smith was a *very* commonplace personage, and in no wise likely to light up a flame, disastrous or otherwise, in the human heart. If the whole truth must be told, she was particularly what the ladies call *plain*—and, oh me ! how much they mean by the word !—to look at ; weak and hot-headed internally, almost in equal proportion ; and, indeed, to say all, in point of temper, education, *constitution* even, a spoiled child, who only wanted the least possible misdirection to become a wicked one.

At that period, however, when he was first requested to court his cousin, George Behringbright was of an age when it is said that no woman is absolutely displeasing. He had just left school, as it were, for he had made rather a serious business of acquiring information in his university career ; willing, as far as he possibly could, to comply with the expectations of his family. He had mingled very little in society, and his mother took good care, while her projects were brewing, that no fascinating interloperesses should distract the attention of her son. Miss Abella was at least young, and had sufficient of womanly coquetry and pride to desire to overcome an indifference in a member of the opposite sex which it is possible she discerned. She played, therefore, a pretty strong card in the game. Habits of obedience to family authority were also adhesions of their *continental* extraction, which clung to the Behringbrights in their transplantation to the free and generous English soil, which it is well known suffers no slavery upon it ; not even the slavery of filial duty, and patient obedience to the commands which were deemed sacred in those foolish old patriarchal days when Jacob waited seven years for his bride. And to all this it must be added, that George Cocker in his younger days was as thoroughly impregnated with the family notions on finan-

cial subjects as any other member of it, and fully perceived the propriety of keeping Miss Abella Smith's two hundred thousand pounds in it. He was a great deal more mercenary then, poor fellow, than he became at a subsequent period, when he knew the value of money better.

Accordingly, the Baroness Behringbright was not doomed to failure in every thing that regarded her eldest hope; and in due course she had the extreme satisfaction of knowing that she had beaten a whole swarm of intriguing mammas and fortune-hunters, and of presiding over one of the most splendid marriage-breakfasts ever given in May Fair,—the fashionable locality or ere Belgravia was,—in celebration of the union of that distinguished heir of “one of our most wealthy commercial families, who have done so much to establish the mercantile greatness of this country on the highest and securest pedestals, with the beautiful and accomplished heiress of the late excellent and esteemed Moydore Smith, Esq., and Co., of Toadmorton Street, and Goldchamber Hall, Wessex, many years M.P. for the East Riding of the county of Richmond.”

I do not suppose—at least, I never read of it—that there was ever a finer bridal feast, even when an old Plantagenet king wedded him to some damsel who brought him a province and a war for a dowry. The whole neighbourhood was made wretched for weeks afterwards by the splendour of the fete; for in spite of all one's natural benevolence, it is not pleasant to see other people apparently superlatively happy. But when the bridecakes, silvered and towered up with all manner of chaste designs by Mr. Gunter, were distributed among the guests; when the cold fowls and the ham, the only really eatable dishes, and all the other splendid indigestibles, were either devoured or removed otherwise; when the tablecloths of white satin, flowered with silver, were raised, covered with the stains of “wine and wittles,” in the solemn words of the waiters who performed the ceremony, and wondered at the wastefulness of “nobs,” who were not content with what would wash; when the last bottle of fifty dozens of Clicquot's first brand had been drunk in the kitchen to the health of the young pair just departed, by the hiccuping

butler and a confused crowd of glaring-eyed other domestics, male and female, rejoicing over the termination of the fatiguing glories of that ever-memorable day,—there was still something to follow; and Mr. and Mrs. George Cocker Behringbright had to live “happy and happy” together ever afterwards—if they could.

But they couldn't. We have seen and said that Miss Abella Smith was a spoiled child and heiress. What that means in practical exposition, Heaven befriend those whose miserable doom it is to learn. There was no kind of selfishness, absurdity, headlong caprice, insatiable craving and croaking, of which that overwhelming heiress was not capable. She did not love her husband, but she persecuted him as if she did. She seemed to consider that he also had been created by Providence solely to wait on her caprices, in common with all the rest of the animate and inanimate world. She had a notion, I believe, that the sun only rose and set because she required its light. She considered that her money entitled her to every thing, and that no other being in existence had any rights or privileges but such as she could manage to dispense with. Blessed saints! what a martyrdom she led George Cocker Behringbright during a period of seven long, long, long years; dating from the second day of their honeymoon, when she ordered him to buy her a nosegay of some pet hothouse flower of her fancy, and went into hysterics, in their travelling carriage-and-four, because he thought they had better not turn aside from their road to Lyons and Italy, and drive seventy miles or so to the nearest great town, where they could hope to meet with rare exotics of the kind!

Mr. Behringbright was, as has been recited, even as a very young man, of much patience and self-control; but his wife's inordinate exactions grew at last to disturb even his resigned and philosophical mood. It came to pass, then, one unlucky day, that—although he had the finest of town and country houses, the most gorgeous of furniture, the most splendid of decorations of every kind and sort to his existence—he perceived he was not happy. He was very far from happy—he was miserable. There was

no congeniality between his wife's tastes, manners, or occupations, and his own. They had not an idea in common. She was frivolous, heartless—insipid in private intercourse beyond expression—far beyond the average run of things in domestic bliss. At the same time she was overbearing, insolent, abusive even, in her whole language and demeanour. Enormous as the portion of her wealth placed at her own disposal was, she managed to be extravagant beyond its limits; and yet there was nothing but discomfort and confusion in the gorgeous household. No one was happy in it; no one thing in its proper place. Above all, this poor woman was bitten with a very bad form of the Smith *rabies*, and was bent and determined, whatever it cost to her or hers, to become a leading member of fashionable society.

What torments, what mortifications, what days and nights of fatigue and joyless dissipation—what enormous expenses, in fine, did George Cocker Behringbright undergo, toiling in the galleys of his senseless Cleopatra's determination to this effect! How did the ungrateful, fugitive waves indeed burn with their gold, as they strained up their Cydnus against all manner of baffling winds and gales, with sails spread vainly purple to the uncongenial and unfavouring skies, that rained pitilessly on them in return, and kept the crew perpetually in wet and steaming garments, suffering all manner of catarrhs and respiratory miseries! It is quite impossible that any body, who is allowed to eat a crust of bread in peace in a corner, can have any notion what a wretched life of it George Cocker Behringbright led, as an unwilling, unfit, every way indisposed, quiet, domestic, home-loving *leader of ton*, by his wife's decree!

He grew to hate it at last, and all about it, and to grow sulky, and to refuse to lift the oar, at whatever risk of the galley-master's lashing tongue; and the beginning of a great contention was firmly established between the spouses, one of whom was the most obstinate and self-willed of all possible ignorant and egotistic individuals; the other, that formidable sort of animal—a patient man driven beyond his patience.

It is not to be denied that, besides the abounding elements of contention and rupture that had always existed in the diverse and opposed natures of the ill-matched pair, Mr. Behringbright had discovered in the interval that his wife was decidedly no beauty, and that, in by far the greater part of her proceedings, she exhibited the most disgusting want of good taste, good manners, and even of a decently good heart, which inexpressibly pained and repulsed his own. Alienation of course followed on these disillusionings; disputes, jealousies, separate apartments, rancorous feuds, friends interfering on all sides. But undoubtedly the main faults still continued on the wife's side—her own friends (*mehercle !*), even her lawyers, admitted it—up to the time when the sad discovery was made of that truly wonderful lapse from all virtue and honour and decency, on the part of Mrs. George Cocker Behringbright, which resulted in the shocking divorce case of which all of us who are permitted to read the papers are aware; wherein the plaintiff was one of the wealthiest of London merchants, and the defendant a miserable Irish groom!

It is not a thing to be dwelt upon; but need we wonder so much now that Mr. G. C. Behringbright had continued for some good ten or fifteen years neither a bachelor nor a widower, but a person who was free to marry, and did not show the least sort of inclination that way, in spite of the blandishments of every kind showered profusely on the path of the millionaire merchant?

Such Mr. Behringbright had become more than ever since his father's demise, although he had relinquished his wife's fortune to the uttermost farthing, to herself and her paramour, in breaking for ever the links of their alliance. He had apparently found a great solace and refreshment in accumulating riches upon the riches whose vanity he had learned and known so long. Such had long appeared to be the principal object of his existence, and to that object he devoted all the powers and energies of his mind. To know that other people knew he was growing wealthier and wealthier every day, and admired and applauded him for it, had become his chief means of concealing from him-

self the hollowness of his existence—of all that he was doing and living for. The noise of a drum perhaps thus silences the convictions of the unfortunate who is condemned to beat it, and who is consoled by observing what a number of still more uncomfortable-looking, yearning vagrants attend upon the dissonant uproar.

We need no longer be surprised to know that this man of unbounded wealth fed and lodged and clothed himself as quietly as if he had been only that hapless pauper—of five-hundred a-year—one of his commentators at the *Dolce-Far-Niente Club*.

He had chambers in the Albany, over a square two yards of mignonette and nasturtiums, with a housekeeper who might have sat for Hecate—only that Hecate is nowhere stated to have snuffed; and he generally wore a suit of coarse brown tweed, with a shabby hat—especially in summer, when almost every one wore a good one; high-low boots with drab tops and big mother-of-pearl buttons: and he carried an umbrella whenever the sky looked threatening; that is, as often as not.

Meanwhile it is true that Mr. Behringbright kept up three fine mansions in the country: one for people to stare through; another for his mother, the Dowager Baroness, to scold fifteen maids of all kinds of work in; and a third for an occasional shooting-box, or any thing else he thought proper. But he showed no kind of eagerness to avail himself of the lavish overtures extended to him by “Society” to enter its enchanted precincts, and pluck again the gorgeous fruit he had already tasted and found of a species which intelligent travellers have informed people of less migratory habits grows on the borders of the Dead Sea. Considering all things, I do not see that we need be exorbitantly astonished, however much we may be scandalised, at Mr. Behringbright’s implication even in the vagaries of outrageous *Incognita* herself.

CHAPTER VI.

“CORRUMPERE ET CORRUMPI SÆCULUM VOCATUR.”

TACITUS, *De Mor. Ger.*

AND THAT'S WHAT YOU MAY CALL—THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

Free Translation.

OF course, nobody speaks of a man's private affairs to his face. Accordingly, when Mr. Behringbright entered the smoking-room of the Dolce-Far-Niente Club, the whole conversation about the go-ahead Lady Incognita of the Ring ceased. Had ceased, in point of fact, only that people were still thinking the subject over in their minds—such, at least, as thought at all; which was a minority. By far the majority simply—smoked.

“Do you mean a cigar?” said Mr. Fauntleroy, as Mr. Behringbright seated himself beside him, stretched himself, and yawned a little—perhaps at the very sight of an elderly gentleman opposite, who, acting on a supposition that he was a man of wit and vivacity—which he was at quarter-sessions, in that part of the country where his estates lay—was the most insufferable bore in the Club, or in the world indeed, and merited the name of a Social Evil quite as much as a good many persons of the feminine gender, for whom the politeness of the modern Mid-night Kettledrum has invented the term.

“Yes, and a glass of absinthe.”

“Bitters to the bitter!” muttered Mr. Fauntleroy, with difficulty keeping his joke undertoned; but *he* knew a great deal better than to lose a moneyed friend for a joke. On the contrary, he was all the while considering what he could say to oblige Mr. Behringbright; meanwhile producing a richly-arabesqued straw-paper fold of cigars—in the original Turkish wrapper, as they came from the Sultan's manufactory, you may believe—from which he requested him to select, and summoning a fine gentleman in an imposing suit of gorgeously-hued plush, with a wink of his little finger, to do the other part of the attendance.

"Thank you. What kind are they?"

"You know I deal only in the *mildest articles* of all sorts—every where but in the 'Deadly-Lively'!" replied Mr. Vivian, naming a celebrated but since defunct Review—defunct, at least, in the sense in which the great Lord Chesterfield (he of the maxims which have formed so many fine gentlemen), in his advanced age, observed to a friend in a similar predicament, "You and I have long been dead; but let us keep the secret." However, no *living* review can take offence under the circumstances.

"I know you do; but I like coarse tobacco. Haven't you any Trichinopoly by you?" said Mr. Behringbright, speaking as heavily and clumsily as he could, on purpose, in the observation.

"The brute!" *thought* Mr. Fauntleroy; but he said, "My dear sir, no; I should as soon think of smoking oakum."

"*Picking* oakum, you mean, don't you?" his interlocutor rejoined, with an innocent expression of query; for Mr. Behringbright was a cynic of the school of Democritus of Abdera, if he was a cynic at all, and did not laugh much at his own good things.

Sir Solomon Comynplace made up for that reticence, however. He burst into a guffaw you might have heard at the Fountains (by courtesy) in Trafalgar Square, from where he sat—no great distance, certainly. "Ha! ha! ha! Capital, capital! That's what I call a good hit—a regular *oner*, Fonty, my boy! How are your digesters after it? By the bye, Mr. Behringbright, have you heard *my* last?"

"No; I should *like to*," returned that gentleman, in the same equable tone; adding respectfully to the waiter, who now approached, "A meerschaum of some good flavoured tobacco, Mr. Mullan, if you please."

Mr. Behringbright was not one of those frequenters of public establishments of the kind who believe that all waiters are christened John or George, according to the caprice of the godfather addressing them.

Meanwhile, it had been Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy's turn to laugh at Sir Solomon Comynplace's "*oner*," which he did very heartily; because Sir Solomon, though a rich

landed proprietor, never lent money in town, whereas the rapper of the repartee *gave* it, under that form, both in country and town. "How do *you* like yours—come now? Mr. Behringbright would be glad to *have your last*, Sir Solomon; and I'm sure I join in the request. *Do* let's have it."

"Mr. Behringbright didn't mean *that*. I know what he meant," said Sir Solomon pettishly. "How you do giggle, Mr. Fauntleroy!—like some great girl just out of long-clothes—I mean, in frocks and trousers, with a hoop, and all that. It's about the garotters, you know, Mr. Behringbright; a capital thing."

"It must be, if you extracted fun out of them, *worthy* to be your last, Sir Solomon," the gentleman replied very quietly.

This conversation took place, of course, ever so long ago; but as the system of catching vermin, fattening them, and then shaking them out loose in the barns, has been in vogue for some time, it was not an anachronism, Mr. Critic!

"Regular fun, I tell you! It's in the form of a conundrum."

"Is it?" said Mr. Behringbright, and his jaw did rather fall at the notion. In reality, can there be a greater nuisance in society than being set a puzzle when you want to be quiet, and not to think even about any thing worth thinking of?

"Yes; a first-rate one, though. Would you like to hear it?"

"I can't help myself, if you *will* set it me, Sir Solomon," replied the victim mournfully. "But Vivian here, who is so quick-witted at every thing, will have to guess it for you."

"I shall charge handsomely, Sir Solomon, if I do," the latter gentleman said—"by the hour, in fact; so mind it isn't very difficult."

"Ha! ha! ha! by the *hour*! The way they charge on Hampstead Heath!" vociferated Sir Solomon. Decidedly the laugh was with him on this occasion, and against Mr. Fauntleroy, who flushed scarlet, but speedily rallied.

"Do you usually take *asinustrian* exercise, Sir Solomon, when you are airing your wits?" he inquired.

"Never mind, Sir Solomon; let us have the conundrum," good-naturedly interposed Mr. Behringbright.

"*You* shall, my boy! It's this," said Sir Solomon, drawing nearer on the divan cushions, where they all sat like a group of enchanters over a fumigation, to the favoured individual, while an indignant glance seemed to exclude Mr. V. F. from any share in the advantages. There is nothing, be it noted, your flingers of sarcasm at others like worse than the ball back again, as hard as it was thrown. "*Why*," he continued, with the usual italicised emphasis of a professional conundrum-maker—"why ought the College of Surgeons to meet and change the name of one of the principal arterial communications of the human body?"

Mr. Behringbright shook his head hopelessly, and fumbled in his pocket for a piece of paper to light his meerschaum.

"Give it up?"

"No, *I* don't!" said Mr. Fauntleroy, with convulsive eagerness; for, after all, there is something quite irresistible in the smell of the burned bacon-rind in the trap of the conundrum-maker. We all like to show our parts by finding out his, and so fall into it.

"What is it, then?"

Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy, like most other persons of particularly brilliant talent, thought ten thousand explanations in a moment, but not the right one among them all.

"I'll give it up—unless you mean that the *carotid artery* ought to be re-called the *garotted artery*?" then queried Mr. Behringbright, who was *not* a person of particularly brilliant talent.

"Ha! ha! ha! Yes, yes; but why don't you laugh, Behringbright? Ha! ha! ha! Why, can't you even see a good thing when it's set before you? Ha! ha! ha! why even Fauntleroy laughs, who's envious, and grudges every body's good things."

"So I do, Sir Solomon—*every body's but yours.*"

"It's very good," said Mr. Behringbright, still with

perfect gravity, but with a quietly rebuking glance at Mr. Fauntleroy, who was evidently getting rude. "Original, of course? I'm only asking for Vivian's benefit; it may be of use to him next time he dines out—and he likes to be original. But I hope none of us will be called upon to see the joke in its full beauty as we are toddling home at night—eh?"

This latter exclamation was occasioned by Mr. V. F. suddenly interposing his hand between Mr. Behringbright's and one of the jets of a gas-lamp, which he had drawn down on the pulley, with a view apparently to light a paper medium at it, which he had drawn from his pocket, for his meerschaum.

"Why, you are going to burn a billet-doux, no doubt! Downright sacrilege! Evidently a female paw. What are you thinking of, Mr. Behringbright?"

"Ah, yes, so it is; not a billet-doux, however; not exactly all treacle and honey; a kind of epistle I don't relish much, however sweetened up for the palate. An anonymous one."

"Anonymous! I daresay I could tell you the name if I saw the handwriting," said Mr. Fauntleroy, who, besides an inexhaustible fund of curiosity in other people's affairs, prided himself on being as knowledgeable in every thing scandalous and improper about town as the devil-on-two-sticks himself, shifting the scene from Madrid to London.

"Look at it, then: if it is a secret, it's one confided to me without my knowledge or consent; but it's only worth burning to light one's pipe."

Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy took the paper eagerly, and not only scanned the caligraphy, but in a very brief glance mastered the contents. It was no additional difficulty for him that it was written in the French language, which of course, as an original English novelist, and also with a view to a diplomatic situation, he carefully studied.

"Why, it's a regular *bonne fortune*, no doubt; allow me to congratulate you," he observed, laughing as he read.

"A *bonne fortune*? how do you mean? Don't you see it's altogether an attack on that—that poor stupid girl,

who is making such a noise just at present, because there's nothing else happening in the Parks?"

"I see that it says that the writer has it in her power, and is perfectly willing, to expose to the best, the noblest, the most generous of men—"

"Spare my blushes, my good fellow!"

"When I see them.—To the best, the most generous of men,—the incomparable perfidies, the infidelity without example, of the most ungrateful, the most lost, the least-worthy-of-consideration woman in the world; who astonishes the same by her exhibition without *pudeur* every day, among the nobility and greatness of this virtuous England, whom she scandalises as well as the main beneficent cause, by the splendour of her iniquity! I see all this; but I see also that the writer appoints a place where to make her revelations; states that she is permitted occasionally to accompany a *most lovely and interesting youthful lady*—her charge and pupil—to the French plays at the Théâtre of Saint Jacques, as the nearest opportunity to bring the language and correctness of the Parisian phraseology to the ears of her pupil. And I see that she will be there next Friday, and that the number of her box is given, if Monsieur requires any further elucidations of a mystery which ought to be mortal to the generous confidence he reposes in the detestable Incognita!"

"Well, what of all that?" said Mr. Behringbright, who looked at the lively and sarcastically-smiling man about town, with even more than customary seriousness and simplicity of meaning in his own eyes.

"Oh, nothing particular; you go, of course?"

"I know the night, at all events, and the box is Number One, and I shan't forget that any more than other people; so there's no reason why I shouldn't light my pipe with the communication," said Mr. Behringbright, suiting the action to the word.

"Well, I own I myself should have some little curiosity to know the worst that can be said about this extraordinary creature, who is shaking Rotten Row from its propriety," said Vivian, eyeing Mr. Behringbright, and

wondering how far he durst venture in that direction; for although he had so confidently given his auditory a few minutes before almost statistical figures on the subject, he really knew very little more than other people concerning the relations alleged to exist between the millionaire and the driveress of the celebrated ponies in the silver harness.

"I haven't: I know the worst that can be said about her," Mr. Behringbright replied, drawing his first puff of consolation.

"Somebody must be at a dreadful expense with her."

"Somebody is."

There was a pause.

"Then I suppose *you* won't be at the Théâtre, Michel, on Friday night?" ventured Vivian Fauntleroy.

"What should I go for?—to listen to a Frenchwoman's abuse of another that isn't one? Is it worth while, do you think?" Mr. Behringbright replied, easing off his indignation in a series of rapid puffs, that perhaps transferred the sentiments in his soul into the bowl of his pipe, for it glowed up like a red-hot coal.

"Oh, stop now, softly; you are not quite such a young beginner as all that, Mr. Behringbright! Odds my life! I shouldn't a bit wonder but what some French gouvernante or another, allured by the glorious renown of the *liberality* of Incognita's millionaire, has a project in hand to betray some innocent young beauty confided to her charge!"

"Good heavens! you don't think so?" exclaimed Mr. Behringbright, now turning quite sickly pale, and staring at his vivacious illuminator with an extremely startled expression.

"Just the thing *I* should expect."

Mr. Behringbright's face grew scalding-hot for a moment—then very much paler than ordinary again.

"I shall go to Michel's on Friday evening," he said, at last, with an apparently painful effort at forming the resolution. "Thank you, Vivian, for putting me up to this—this *bonne fortune*, I think you call it! God bless me!" he continued, in a sort of muttered reverie rather

than to his hearer, "I didn't mean such a horror as this ! The Spartans never made their slaves drunk before the women, I suppose, since that is the way they take example ! But I'll bring one of them to justice," this confirmed misogynist concluded, "if I find her out in such a devilish piece of mischief as this !"

CHAPTER VII.

THE UPPER FALLS.

"I WONDER what it is Mademoiselle Loriôt has so much to say to Madeleine !" said Miss Rosabella Sparx, surveying the pair, pupil and Parisienne instructress, from the window of the schoolroom, as they walked arm-in-arm, apparently in earnest conversation, in the enclosure of the grounds.

"She tells me that she wants to polish her off completely in her French, before she leaves at the end of this quarter," said the eldest Miss Sparx, who, on matters of business, was rather rational, and used vernacular phrases.

"And I think she will manage it," said Miss Rosabella, drily ; "only I don't think I would have too much of it, sister Susannah, if I were you, while I am away at Captain Troller's mother's at Fulham. I don't half like that woman ; and if any thing should happen, you know what ruin and disgrace it would bring upon the school."

"Oh, what *could* happen ? You had better not go, dear, if you think any thing would ! And I am sure I don't know what *you* want going among that Captain Troller's friends !" said Miss Sparx, entering a feeble protest against things in general, and her sister's intended military marriage in particular.

"Perhaps not, Susie dear ; only I received an invitation, and have accepted it," said the youngest sister, in a coaxing way.

Rosabella Sparx was a clever woman ; but even the cleverest of us like to be sometimes happy.

"You shouldn't, dear—at least, until the regular partnership is dissolved. What a pity you *must* marry, and go on this visit!" said the eldest sister, with a vague consciousness of impending destiny.

"Pho! nonsense! nothing will happen if you attend to my advice while I am away. I don't think you need mind about having the tile put on the out-washhouse, although we are bound to it by our lease; but do take care of the girls, Susan. I am very glad *that* Madeleine is going so soon—and I really think it would be best if Mademoiselle Olympe left the school before I did."

"Oh, why so? She knows French so well!" sighed Miss Sparx.

"For that very reason," rather absently observed Miss Rosabella; but at that moment the little prim under-housemaid of the establishment entered with a small but handsome bouquet of flowers, which she tendered to Miss Rosabella with a significant smirk, and the observation, "With Captain Troller's compliments, Miss Rosabella!" and every thing else was forgotten in examining, smelling, savouring to the heart's core those wretched flowers. Women ARE so foolish!

I am of opinion that the acute and far-seeing Rosabella Sparx (in what concerned other people) would have been still less satisfied with the extremely friendly and confidential relations existing between Miss Madeleine Graham and the French governess in that perfected Gymgynæcium, if she could have overheard the conversation which was taking place at the moment between the attached Olympe and her favourite pupil.

"But—won't he think it—dreadfully *odd*?" Miss Graham was remarking, in a rather agitated undertone, to her affectionate and judicious adviser.

"Why should he?—why should he?—I ask myself, I ask you, I ask every body. I proffer him a good counsel—an *avertissement*—which, from my relations with Madame Millefleurs, celebrated modiste of Paris, resident in London, I may be supposed capable to communicate without criminality. *You* have nothing to do with it; you are my pupil; your *riches parens* wish to have you every

advantage. We have a box entirely to ourselves at the *Comédie Française*, transported to this capital by an *entrepreneur* of obliging genius, who wishes the English people to survey his national drama in the original. Who should wonder?—who should hold up his hands? And how are you in any way compromised, I ask you? If it is any body, it is I—it is I alone! And I explain to him that, touched with the illustrious generosity of his sentiments, I cannot support to see him made the victim of a perfidious woman who derides his benefits!”

“But will he not wonder to see me there with you and nobody else?”

“Let him wonder! What matters how much he wonders if he—what you call it?—if he falls over head, ears, in love with the charming Madeleine?”

“I don’t see how it follows that he will, Olympe.”

“It is that you do not look in the looking-glass that I look you in.”

“But are you sure that he will not think it very queer of *me*?—very bold and strange, you know?”

“How so? What have you to do with it? You go to the play in quality of my *élève*—nothing more.”

“Yes; but then—should I go with a—a lady—who *pretends to know all about Incognita*?”

“Leave to me to explain every thing, without the least concern of yours! Do you think I am not aware it is an honourable matrimony we propose, to secure legitimate claims to the enjoyment of so vast a wealth? Is it creatures of a moment we propose to be, like this unhappy Incognita, who is an air-balloon of a young child, which mounts to the sky, only to collapse and fall to the ground at the first touch of the damp?”

“Take care, then, what you do, Olympe, or you might get *me* into a horrid mess too. I own I don’t half like it, when I think of it. Papa wouldn’t approve of it, I know, and mamma would be quite frightened. Still, I shall have to go home so soon if I don’t try at something, and I would rather be married in England.—But don’t you say *now*, besides, he is a widower?”

“It is true: I concealed the most disagreeable of the

situation to the last. No ; he is not a widower, but he is *tant soit peu* as good—he is a *divorcé* : he cannot reproach you with his wife—which always they can otherwise !”

“The one before me, you mean, don’t you ?” said Miss Graham, rather drily.

“And we will not concern ourselves about the one *after* me, if such a misfortune should arrive,” said Mademoiselle, facetiously. “Ah, *quel plaisir*—what a satisfaction—it is, to avenge ourselves upon men ! After my treatment by Camille—my beloved Camille—there is nothing I do not think to myself to owe the whole human race !”

“He behaved very unhandsomely to you, poor dear,” said Miss Graham, trying to utter the commiseration so as to provoke as little as possible the fluent reminiscences of her friend. But precaution was of no use.

“In the event—in the end—but ah ! how happy we were, exhausting the torrents of a never-wearying sentiment, until he found out by an unhappy accident I had no money !” continued Mademoiselle Leriôt. “Up to a certain point I had persuaded him that I was *riche* ; almost had I induced him to believe that I was the young immense fortune whose education I superintended ;—obliged therefore, by the circumstances of such a position, to a clandestine correspondence and interviews only—which accounted for all. Ah ! to what extravagances does a love for one moment not authorised by society drive us !—Until that unhappy discovery, what praises did he not heap upon me for my preference of the intoxication of a delicious sentiment to every motive of interest, every concern for the parvenu views, the mercenary susceptibilities, of a family which aspired to take rank among the loftiest exaltations of the Second Empire, based on material motives and interests only ! Ah, what a dreadful scene when he discovers all ! I remember—my heart remembers, like the echoes of a tomb ! I meet him in the Jardin Mabille, because that, of all places in the world, is the least where a young lady, well educated, of a certain rank, is to be dreaded to be found. What father, of the highest respectability, however animated by a restless suspicion, would seek

for us there? Alas! it is in one of the most delightful bowers of that Garden of Armida, remote, as far as we can procure ourselves, from the intrusive scent of tobacco, that we are seated, in a pause of the dance, exchanging vows of eternal fidelity, when the agent of the police surprises us, with his detestable accusation of me as a person who has forged letters, and expressions of the devotion of a passionate emotion on the part of a young simpleton altogether innocent,—incapable of descending, I mean, from the *avide* self-love of her position as the daughter of a financier, who aspires to the vulgar elevation of a wife of some count or duke of the Second of December——To ascend, I should say rather—it is my word—to a height of so noble a wing, so full of an abandonment of egotistic motives, so altogether beyond praise!"

"You were found out, were you, before you could regularly entráp the greedy fellow? A regular fortune-hunter, I suppose?" said Miss Graham, who could not see herself—as the stage phrase runs—in the fac-simile character placed before her, or she might not have been so severe upon it.

"By an unhappy mistake, in the confusion and hurry of my toilet for the Jardin (it is supposed I am going to the *Innocents* for devotion), I leave a fatal letter on the table, of which a *femme de chambre*, my enemy, possesses herself to my destruction."

"It is a stupid sort of thing to write letters. I don't intend ever to write letters if I can help it," said Madeleine.

Could she have foreseen *what* letters she should write! —*what* destruction they would entail!

No more was said at present. The school-bell rang for tea, and no one was expected to be absent from that solemn muster round the smoking twilight urn.

The next day Miss Rosabella went on her visit to her intended relations—his mother and sister; who were under strict injunctions to be pleased with her, but did not well know how, as a considerable portion of their income, and all their enjoyments in life, depended upon keeping their brother unmarried. But in good truth it was like the

Discreet Princess turning her back for a few hours on her sisters, shut up albeit they were in a like Tower-without-an-Inlet! Hardly was Rosabella gone (she wore one of the prettiest bonnets, I think, I ever saw; white chip, trimmed with a shimmering of lilac feathers and lace and flowers, like an April garden) than Mademoiselle Loriôt hastened with her little petition to Miss Sparx—eldest, not wisest, of the daughters of her father and mother. To-morrow was Mademoiselle's fête-day, she explained, with touching sensibility, venting itself in a shower of tears as she spoke; a day which she should scarcely think a year had elapsed, unless she was allowed to celebrate with a little *réjouissance de famille*. *Eh bien*, her aunt, Madame Millefleurs, celebrated artiste of Paris and Londres—in brief, an artiste in embellishment of the most *recherchée* of the Arcade Whirlington—she arrives once more from that beautiful city of her (Mademoiselle Olympé's) tenderest *souvenirs*; and she demands with an extreme solicitude to see her beloved niece, to spend one *heureuse soirée* with her, and tell her all the news of the family. It is in the name of the fondest ties of family, so respected in England, that Mademoiselle demands permission to go to see her aunt to-morrow, to inspect all her beautiful articles of Paris of the first luxury; and she promises herself to lead with her her favourite pupil, Mees Graham, with the end to bestow upon her the whole nomenclature of the Parisian *boutique de toilette*. Alas! she departs so soon; when shall she have another opportunity?

Now, the eldest Miss Sparx was of her own nature the most inoffensive, unsuspecting British woman it is possible well to imagine. She had her weak points certainly; she believed, for example, that she understood Botany; and as she had several hundred shells neatly arranged in three drawers on pale-green paper, to represent the ocean, she knew she understood Conchology. But on the whole she was a specimen of an almost extinct species of her genus, we fear, which, knowing no harm, feared none; and in spite of all Miss Rosabella's warnings and cautions, she really and truly believed that Mademoiselle Loriôt was simply animated by a good-natured desire to bestow the

finishing touches to perfection on her favourite pupil, and procure her at the same time a little pleasing feminine amusement in the inspection of an importation of Parisian nicknacks. More than this kindly British conviction, Miss Sparx had felt rather snubbed and presumptuously called to attention by her younger sister, and she felt an irresistible inclination to exhibit some signs of free will and action accordingly, in a reverse manner to that enforced upon her, in that sister's absence. The divines are certainly right, and there is a natural tendency in human nature to go the way it is ordered not to; so that even *their* sign-posts point so often over grass-grown and desolate roads!

"I don't mind giving you your holiday, Mademoiselle; but if you take Madeleine on the excursion, it must be in the morning," she kindly acquiesced, on these considerations.

"But my *cousine* will not be at home in the morning; she returns fatigued from the pursuits of her commerce only in the evening, to a tranquil cup of—what you call it?—a *strong green tea*."

"Your *cousin*! I thought you said your *aunt*?"

"It is that I am a foreigner, and do not understand the difference."

"Well, but I won't have Madeleine out after dusk," said Miss Sparx resolutely. "And I don't know that Rosabella would let her out at all without some one—some one *else* with her."

"Ah, it is an empire of the most unusual, to reign also in our absence!" sneered Mademoiselle, judiciously; adding coaxingly, "And Madeleine has asked it of me as the greatest favour, without which I should not consent—merely to give her satisfaction. For it is of a necessary diplomacy, Madame is aware, to infuse the best reports of our school in the city, commercial and rich, whither she returns. But after *dusk*? Oh, no, no, no! *Dusk* lasts till quite night now. We shall return at latest at nine."

Mademoiselle Loriôt knew that it would be very easy to miss the omnibus; hazardous, perhaps, but possible, to fail in getting a cab; so to be able to plead the excuse of a long walk home, to account for a couple of extra

hours ; not to mention that Miss Sparx was taking upon herself a responsibility of volition, which might be used to place her in the position of an accomplice, and, as such, bound to screen any moderate degree of license into which Mademoiselle might extend the liberty accorded her.

Still, I am not sure she would have carried her point if Miss Hortensia had not come in at the moment, and, on learning the subject in debate, had not pronounced in the most decided manner that Madeleine Graham should *not* be permitted to leave the sheltering walls of the seminary, for even only a couple of hours, under the sole charge of Mademoiselle Loriôt.

This very properly irritated Miss Sparx, and determined her not to submit to dictation. From a person, too, who was always telling people she was I don't know how much younger than—than the person whose opinion she was for setting so unceremoniously aside,—whose authority, it appeared, was to go for nothing in the school! No : *Rosabella* had, perhaps, some right to be listened to ; she generally gave some reasons for what she wanted done or not done. But Miss Hortensia seemed to think that because she spoke in that loud, hectoring, play-actress sort of a fashion—put her absolute “no” on every thing—she was to have it all her own way ! In short, was she, Miss Sparx, the head of the establishment—the *acknowledged head*—the senior partner ; or was she not ? If she *was*, she thought she might be considered competent to decide upon such a mere trifle as whether a pupil parlour-boarder, quite a grown-up girl too herself, might or might not be allowed to go out for a couple of hours' innocent recreation with one of the senior teachers, who promised to take the greatest possible care of her, and who, every one could see, besides, was greatly attached to her.

There was a grand quarrel upon this, in which Hortensia used a great deal of fine language. She even made her elder sister cry at last, with the Ciceronian weight and majesty of her arguments and invectives. And then Prætilia herself got frightened, and gave in, for Miss Sparx had a most uncomfortable way of going off into hysterics whenever she thought proper ; and Finetta being, as we

have seen, away on her own concerns, the simple eldest sister's fiat went forth without further opposition, and the young lady was permitted to go out with her attached preceptress, for a few hours, to take tea with Madame Millefleurs, of Paris and Londres, and acquire the nomenclature of the *articles de Paris* of which that lady was an approved *marchande*, and her house the esteemed *entrepôt*.

CHAPTER VIII.

“CE QUE FEMME VEUT.”

“WOULDN'T it be delightful, Olympe, if one was not so much afraid? What a beautiful little house! What nice boxes! One is as snug as if one was quite at home, with people getting ready to amuse one. Only I am so frightened. If we should be found out!”

“Who shall find us out? Who of the Gynécée Sparx ever thinks of to enjoying the pleasures of the theatre?—a thousand times more, of the *Théâtre Français*? Which of all that *ménagerie* would dream for one moment of transporting itself to a scene of satisfaction so legitimate?”

“But we must take care not to stay too long, Olympe; we shall be like Cinderella and the pumpkins if we do. I suppose we can get home in a cab, as hard as we can tear, in about half an hour? So we must go at ten; half-past ten will be hard enough to account for, you know.”

“But we shall have to change our robes again, dear child.”

“Certainly. How kind of that Madame Millefleurs to lend me this pretty white muslin gown, belonging to her daughter! What a sight I should have looked here in my blue stuff frock, shouldn't I?”

“Madame Millefleurs is all goodness. One should not say it of one's aunt, but it is perfectly true.”

“But I thought you told *me* you had no relations in the world—were a pupil of the *Enfans Trouvés*?” said Madeleine: not disapprovingly, but with a smile at the ridiculous oversight in so clever a person.

"She is my aunt—by *adoption*. Corinne Millefleurs loves me—we love one another. She is one of the best of women—she will take care, if even we a little exceed our time, to invent the most plausible *excuses* for our absence. We can confide in her; do not torment yourself with vain apprehensions, but apply yourself to look all your beauty towards the fifth box from the centre opposite. Ah! and, to confess a truth difficult from one woman to another, never did you exhibit yourself more perfectly *charmante* than in this *négligée* of white muslin merely, with this simple white rose, sparkling from a shower, with silver dust, in your hair. It is a costume that would become, to admiration, Virginie about to fall beneath a dagger of her father, to preserve her from a tyrant! '*M'abandonnes-tu donc, mon père?*'—'*Non; mourez, mourez, fille!*'" concluded Mademoiselle Loriôt, with tears in her eyes, and in so loud and theatrical a tone, on her own account, that if Leicester Square had not mustered very strong in the pit and upper galleries, a large majority of the audience would have been very much surprised. Of such flimsy stuff are sentimental virtue and goodness of all sorts made!

"Is that Mr. Behringbright's box, Olympe?"

"When he occupies it, as it is certain he will to-night."

"What makes you so sure?"

"Is it possible even for insular phlegm to resist, at all events, to a movement of curiosity so certain to be provoked? For there is nothing men and women more desire to know than what they are convinced it will make them miserable to learn; witness the tormenting anxieties of jealousy to discover what will make it deplorable for ever!"

"But you said he does not care at all about that woman in reality?"

"Nevertheless, I persist that he will come; I have been assured so by a person, attendant on the boxes, who has no motive to deceive me,—on the contrary, on whom I have bestowed a benefaction. Do not spoil your expression with anxiety of the kind."

"What is the name of the piece, Olympe?"

"Ah, that delightful—that full of a frank sensibility

comédie-vaudeville, 'Ce que Femme veut!' How astonished the English audience goes to be! only it will understand nothing about it! Pure Parisian is Greek always to an English, no matter how skilful otherwise in the language; and I do not believe that one of them would be here, were it not that always in England to be *fashionable* reconciles to every disgust." And not satisfied with her recent display in the higher evolutions of the dramatic art, Mademoiselle began humming one of the impudent airs of the vaudeville with all the necessary *gaîté* and *espièglerie*,—

"*Vous avez vu, parfois, j'aime à le croire,
Le hanneton, cet insecte naïf,
Bourdonner un chant de victoire,
S'il rompt le fil qui le tenait captif!
Heureux aussi d'un congé qui me flatte
Du hanneton je comprends la fierté!*"

"I can't help thinking you must have seen
Break from the web a tangled fly,
And hum off into the blue serene,
With a sprightly chant of victory!
Rejoicing also my freedom to employ,
I understand, methinks, the cheerful insect's joy."

"Hush, Mademoiselle dear! don't you see the people are beginning to look up at us?" said Madeleine, in apparent alarm; for, in truth, the demonstration was rather too *prononcée* even for Leicester Square, and "*Chut! chut! qu'est ce que cela signifie?*" arose from the pit like the hissing and fizzing of a whole pond of soda and tartaric acid cast into fusion.

"Oh! for the people—for the *gens de parterre*,—who cares for the *people*?" said Mademoiselle, throwing herself back in her velvet arm-chair as insolently as if she had been an Austrian archduchess by birth, and a Queen of France by right divine of an unlucky spouse.

"Sit forward, Olympe! You ought to be on the look-out, you know. Mr. Behringbright will be sure to be coming just now, if he means to come at all; and I must not seem to be looking his way, or he will see through the whole thing at once."

"It is true, admirable child! And it is also true that

a good pupil always surpasses his master. Behold me, then, beside you, determined to countenance you to my utmost *possible*. You are right, Madeleine; the door at the back of Mr. Behringbright's box is opened—the vivid light of the gas in the corridors is visible—he enters! But also *another* with him! I confess it surprises me to see him with another. And what another!”

“Oh, but do look, Olympe, below!—Oh, what a handsome-looking young man staring up at us—at *me*! Don't make such a noise, or he will think we are doing it on purpose.”

“Do not look at the handsome *young men*, Mees Graham, or you will ruin all! Have I not told you to beware of the sensibility of your nature until you have secured a rich husband? Look only as I advise you—nearly opposite.”

“How can I look at him? Wouldn't it make him think something strange at once?”

“In this side-glass, which I have brought on purpose. You shall seem to be looking at quite another person, and you shall see him alone.”

Mademoiselle Loriôt now produced one of those dishonest German opera-glasses, which reflect objects from the sides, while the vision seems directed straight forward. Madeleine took it, and, ignorant at first of its qualities, levelled it with eagerness towards a figure in the pit,—exclaiming the moment afterwards, with evident vexation, “No, I don't see *him*—but I *do* see the man in Box Number Five. *Two* men. One of them quite an old fellow, I think, and so glum and stern—looking towards our box. Can that be Mr. Behringbright? Oh, I don't like his appearance at all, Olympe! He isn't a bit like a person I should fall in love with of my own accord. He looks exactly like a widower! What a contrast to the handsome young Frenchman—I suppose he is—in the pit!—I am sure he is much more deserving to be in the boxes! And what can the person who is with Mr. Behringbright be? I almost think he is a policeman in plain clothes. He sits so stiff in those he has on, as if he had a poker down his back; and his coat is buttoned as hard as

armour over his breast. I am sure he can't be a gentleman."

"A policeman—an agent of the police—with Mr. Behringbright?" said Mademoiselle Loriôt, evidently greatly startled, and shrinking back in the box. The acquaintance she had made on a former occasion with functionaries of the description seemed not to have appetised her to cultivate an enlarged experience.

"I should say we had better take no further notice of Mr. Behringbright, Olympe, or we shall get into trouble. He thinks I am staring like a great child at the picture on the curtain, but I see every thing he does; and he is looking so savage over at *you*, and is whispering the man in the stiff coat, who nods, and, I declare, takes a great vulgar red-and-blue pocket handkerchief out of a hat which he has set down at his feet in the box, and wipes the perspiration off his forehead! It isn't a glazed hat either. But if it is a detective in the disguise of a gentleman!—Olympe, don't pretend to have any thing to do with that letter you wrote. Don't you know that handsome young countryman of yours in the pit? *He* might protect us, if you did know him."

"Tell me what sort of a handsome young man it is? Since you call him so, *chère petite*, explain to me what you comprehend by him—*handsome*?" replied Mademoiselle, endeavouring to preserve her calm in the conjuncture, but by no means exhibiting now the *insouciance* of the "cheerful insect" celebrated in the vaudeville song.

"He is of a good height, I should think, and, oh, such a beautiful figure!—such a divine waist!—just like the pictures in the fashion-books, Olympe! But it is his *face* that is so handsome. I declare he almost looks as if he were painted! Oh, such glorious black hair!—so thick, and cut the way military men have it; and such a darling, darling moustache on his upper lip! I didn't think the Emperor's way of doing the moustache and beard was pretty at all until now; but oh, how well it looks upon this handsome young fellow! I suppose it don't become the other man because *he* is so ugly, though he has married such a pretty woman."

"Oh, for the emperor, he is *plus beau que beau, mon enfant!* Let us say it, to provoke these people in the pit, who are mostly *émigrés* of the Second of December. But this Adonis—on the other hand—that you describe.—*Voyons un peu.* After all, a very handsome man is becoming a rarity in our days," said Mademoiselle Olympe, somewhat rallying from her alarm, and seized with a very natural feminine impulse of curiosity.

"Oh, he is looking up again! Take care, Olympe! He will know you have turned your glass upon him."

"Well, let us suppose it so always. Is a man too modest to be looked at, *ma foi?* We shall not devour him!" replied Mademoiselle Loriôt, producing an ordinary opera-glass, which she had hired for the evening, and levelling it with tranquil effrontery at the object, who, standing upright in the pit, with one white-kidded hand turned backwards and resting, with a scented white handkerchief, on the glossy black broadcloth of his surtout, seemed to challenge the world to match him for personal charms, and, in particular, to claim the suffrages of the ladies then and there present.

"Well, what do you think of him? Is he some young French Count of the Emperor's new court, Olympe, do you suppose? And don't he keep his splendid black eyes turned up towards our box?"

"*Eh, mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the personage addressed, in a tone most surprisingly changed from her previous one of lounging indifference.

"Good heavens! what is the matter, Mademoiselle Olympe? What makes you get up in such a fright?" said Miss Graham, amazed at her friend's suddenly excited demeanour.

"*Qu'est ce que je vois?*—what do I see?—*Ah, quel coup terrible, inattendu!*"

"What is the matter?"

"*C'est que je me trouve mal—c'est que je meurs, mon enfant!*"

"Nonsense! What can make you so ill all of a sudden?—There, take my smelling-bottle; it's beautiful *vinaigre parfumé*, you know; your aunt made me a present of it."

"Let us leave this place, or—or I'm lost—we are all lost!"

"What do you mean? Do you think that Mr. Behring-bright——? It may only be a military man with him; they are as stiff as policemen sometimes, and——"

"I tell you we are lost if we remain!—Do you not know that Vanity never forgives? Hear and tremble, my poor child! This handsome young man, this Adonis of the *parterre* you praise so much,—ah, *mon Dieu!* it is *Camille!*—Camille Le Tellier, the adored of my earliest sensibilities, but who is capable of overwhelming me with the most terrible discoveries in revenge for what he supposes to be the trick I played on him in Paris."

"Couldn't you sit back? and he wouldn't see you."

"Ah! and you parade before him charms but too certain to excite his attention, since they belong to an occupant of the boxes."

"Oh, if you are *jealous of me*, Olympe, let us go, by all means!" said the young beauty, with a contemptuous irritated sneer, that certainly added no charm of expression to her countenance; "let us go, by all means, and lose all we came for, besides the expense!"

"That is true. But at least, dear Madeleine, let me recover myself in the *foyer*—arrange my hair before a mirror, with some little more attention to effect. You comprehend, *chère petite*, that I dressed myself with a rare prudence on this occasion, to impose upon the apprehensions of the sober English Behringbright."

"You mean to go to the saloon?—I don't mind that. I should like to see how I am looking myself, if it is quite where other ladies go, of course."

"*Certainement—cela va sans dire!* Of a course, of a course! Support my arm on this side, in this direction, *mon enfant.*"

They made their way accordingly to the saloon of the *Théâtre St. Jacques de Londres*, which its *habitué*s of that time will remember was fitted up with much luxury and tastefulness of Parisian embellishment, and besides, in compliment to the climate, or submission to the opinions entertained of it by the majority of the frequenters, en-

joyed the advantage, in the height of summer, of an excellent fire in an enormous grate, before which people ate their ices, and talked almost as pleasantly, as freely, and as loudly as at the *foyer* of the *Variétés* itself.

When Mademoiselle Loriôt and her charge entered upon this scene of social relaxation, it was pretty well filled, though still rather early in the evening. But the performances had not yet commenced, and the *salon* was, besides, one of the principal entrances to the genteeler parts of the theatre.

The arrival on the scene of so very pretty a young girl as Miss Madeleine Graham necessarily attracted some attention. A buzz of admiration went round the *salon*. Two French gentlemen, who were stuffing themselves with sponge-cakes and strawberry ices, nearly choked each other in demanding who she was, and complimented "the fortunate Albion," on producing charms so *naïfs*, and capable of exciting emotion even in Parisian breasts. But this first excitement over, it seemed easy enough to cross to one of the great mirrors in a recess on the other side of the saloon, where any disorder of the toilet might be remedied in comparative privacy. And thither Mademoiselle Loriôt directed her march; and all would have been well, if it had not been that the execution of the manœuvre compelled the pair of illicit playgoers to traverse the folding-doors, which admitted from the exterior world to the Thespian antechamber. And, lo and behold! just as they reached the exact point, one of the leaves flew open, and there entered, in full evening costume, with a little crush-hat set knowingly under his arm, and an air of expectant enjoyment diffused over his whole visage, no other and no less undesirable a personage than the Reverend Jabez Bulteel! Miss Hortensia Sparx's sweetheart!—the Reverend Jabez Bulteel!

He explained afterwards, to the Misses Sparx in general, and to Hortensia in particular, that he was at the *Théâtre St. Jacques de Londres* on a new principle of modern divinity; that it is necessary to know the world *practically*—to bring oneself into direct contact with its weaknesses and wickednesses—in order to be enabled to

warn its unhappy denizens of their dangers and delusions. Just as it is advisable for a shepherd to be familiar with all the rocks and precipices of the mountains amid which he pastures his wandering flocks.

He explained so ; completely to Miss Hortensia's *expressed* satisfaction, whatever might be her mental reservations. She felt that at her maturity it would not do to quarrel with a lover. But it is certain that the rencontre, in the present instance, was neither to the expressed nor secret satisfaction of any of the parties assisting in it.

“You here, Miss Graham ! Mademoiselle Loriôt !”

Mademoiselle Loriôt concluded, with the decision of a great general, that it was impossible to prove either an *alibi* or a case of mistaken identity. She took refuge in impudence.

“*You* here, Monsieur l'Abbé ! I should never have dreamed it. As for us, our appearance is perfectly natural and explicable. My aunt, Madame Millefleurs, had received a present of a—what you call every thing ?—a *box*, which she desires me to accept in homage to my fête ; and, overcome by the curiosity and entreaties of Madeleine, I consented.”

“O, Mademoiselle Loriôt, how can you say so ? You know it was *you* proposed it all along, and *would* have me come !”

There was no honour among these thieves of pleasure, at all events.

“It is false, utterly false ! My aunt, who is the best of women, will prove it !” passionately ejaculated the Frenchwoman.

“Beg pardon, ma'am ; but are you the lady wot wrote to a gentleman of the name of Behringbright, about being here *with a young lady*, in Box Number One ?” said the sombre voice of destiny at this moment, through the lungs of the man in the stiff clothes, who had been observed seated with Mr. Behringbright in Box Number Five, and who now made his *entrée*, tremendous as the statue of the Commander in *Don Giovanni*, at the portal.

“*Non, monsieur—non ; je vous le jure.*”

“O Olympe ! how can you say so ?”

“Does any one about know this here French lady's

handwriting?" said the detective, producing a letter from his side-pocket, which he swung on high, carefully above the possible snatch of Mademoiselle.

"I do. Mademoiselle Loriôt wrote that letter, I am sure," exclaimed Madeleine, agonised at her own fearful complication in the affair, and anxious to escape at any sacrifice of her friend.

"Then I've orders to find out your employers, Mad'maselle. and submit this here letter to them, and haet according as they shall decide on; whether to prosecute you for a conspiracy or not," returned the minister of justice, with stern clarity of exposition. "So, if you please to say who they are, it may save some little time and trouble, and that's all."

"Policeman, I—I know this young lady—I will take charge of her home. It is an error of judgment simply on the part of the elder lady, which—which—further exposure is entirely unnecessary, and will only damage all parties." interposed the clerical visitant.

But the well-fee'd official was inexorable.

"I must do my duty. I must see Madam's principals, and go by what they says, and nobody else," he said; and perceiving that the altercation was exciting a degree of public attention likely to be as destructive as any other species of exposure, all the delinquents finally submitted to accompany the detective to a cab, which conveyed them to the Sparx Gymgynæcium,—unconscious, for the most part, that a young gentleman, with a fine black Napoleon-the-Third moustache and beard, who arrived in the midst of the discussion, and listened to it with great interest, without taking any part in it, immediately ordered a hansom to follow in the wake of the four-wheeler that conveyed the belligerents in one cargo home.

CHAPTER IX.

URNS OF FATE BELOW.

AFTER all, no great harm came of the affair.

It is astonishing what humane and Christian-like views

one takes of people's conduct, when one's own interests are concerned in keeping things quiet and all right on the surface. The eldest Miss Sparx was too really agitated even to think of hysterics, when, already growing exceedingly alarmed at the protracted absence of Madeleine and her *chaperon*, she was suddenly called upon to receive a whole cabful of contending statements and *éclaircissements* of causes and effects of so strange a description. But even Miss Sparx perceived, without Hortensia's (for once) plain and unrhctorical statement to the effect, that this affair was not the kind to which to challenge the public attention by any great outcry. And things might have been managed even more comfortably than they were,—glossed over, explained away, put out of sight,—but for that confounded detective, who insisted on throwing his bull's-eye on the whole mystery, and directing other people's observation. This gentleman had been so well paid to be honest, that he could not think of being otherwise on the present occasion; and accordingly, in spite of the general wishes, insisted on the principal of the Sparx Gymnaseum being put thoroughly “up”—in his own expressive language—to all that had occurred; handed her Mademoiselle's epistle to Mr. Behringbright, and fully explained how he came in possession of it, until that British old-maid's spectacles trembled like diamonds in an ague on her nose while she endeavoured to read it; and otherwise went on in the merciless manner of a man who expects no fee or recompense on the other side of the question. Had it not been for the Rev. Jabez Bulteel, who thought that he did not himself figure altogether to his liking in the transaction, Miss Sparx might, in consequence, have gone on like a good many other feeble people, thrown into a position that required decision and resolution, and have proceeded at once to extremes. She might, indeed, have given the unfortunate Olympe into custody on the charge of conspiracy,—with whom or for what would have been subjects of after-consideration,—upon the detective's suggestion, had not Hortensia's sweetheart explained to her that it would be the complete ruin of the school, to prove the mistress of it no more competent for the care of young

girls than would appear on the face of this transaction. Ultimately, he prevailed upon Miss Sparx to send her compliments to Mr. Behringbright, with many thanks for the trouble he had taken, but with every assurance that, from the high character the principals of ROSE-COLOUR HOUSE GYMGYNAECIUM had received with Mademoiselle Loriôt, they could not for a moment entertain the notion that she had any but the *best intentions*, however erroneously directed, in the violation of regulations she had committed in taking her pupil, unauthorised, to the theatre; and that, consequently, they must decline to prosecute.

This *written* message, and a sovereign, satisfied the detective, who thereupon took his departure; and there was not much further trouble with Mademoiselle Loriôt: for on learning, to her inexpressible surprise and grief, of what she was accused, she wept profusely, and, calling on all the gods of her native land to witness her innocence, declared herself thenceforth perfectly incapable of filling any position in an establishment where the bare suspicion of such perfidy could enter the heads of the principals, and consequently gave herself an immediate dismissal, desiring that her clothes (which she carefully packed) and letters might be sent after her to her dear friend and relative's, Madame Millefleur's, *Magasin*; whither she went at once in a second cab, all midnight as it was, pretty certain to find Madame still out of bed and wide awake for the reception of company.

As for Madeleine Graham, it had already been arranged that she was to leave school at the end of the quarter. And Mr. Bulteel further prevailed—on her sincere assurances that she would never do so again, and had never, in fact, done so at all, but had merely improperly accepted her naughty teacher's invitation to look in for an instant and see a French play—that no more should be said on the subject, and that she should be allowed to stay until the fortnight yet intervening—when her parents had agreed to send for her—elapsed. She was only placed under strict surveillance for the time. And thus the whole troublesome matter was pretty nicely hushed up; and after those few mutterings of thunder, and that one vivid

flash, the tempestuous horizon cleared, and nothing more of a harmful character seemed likely to ensue during the whole week of Miss Rosabella's absence. How to explain Mademoiselle Loriôt's sudden departure, on the return of the latter lady, remained the only stumbling-block with the two inculpated Misses Sparx; but, women as they were themselves, they managed at last to take comfort in the conviction that, as Miss Rosabella had recommended the dismissal of this talented instructress, she would not be too curious to investigate the causes why she had her own way given her.

Nevertheless, another event, and one of some importance, occurred to roughen the wavelets of what should have been a quiet seven days of intellectual labour and improvement in the Finishing Academy presided over by the harassed Drona and Prtilia. On the third morning after Miss Rosabella's departure, the clerical guide, philosopher, and friend of the establishment, presented himself at an unusually early hour in its precincts, and, with a countenance almost as pale as his cravat—wontedly, indeed, of a very bloodless hue—and an agitation which he had some difficulty in concealing from the penetrating glance of the upper housemaid, asked to see the two mistresses of the house, in a private apartment. The audience being speedily granted,—with particular velocity on the part of Miss Hortensia, who imagined that a direct proposal, which she had long panted to hear, was about at length to exude from her lover's otherwise fluent lips,—a very different fact was made patent to her unwilling sense. It was *Gazette* day; and as the Sparx Gymgynæcium was intimately connected with commercial circles, and Mr. Bulteel took a most friendly interest in the welfare of its conductresses, he usually perused that somewhat dry and uninteresting portion of the public intelligence very diligently through. And he now came to announce to the Misses Sparx that among the names in the muster-roll of commercial ruin he was greatly concerned to observe that of the father of one of their best pupils,—and their own banker, he was afraid?—Ichabod Maughan, Maughan, and Co., of Threadneedle Street and Calcutta.

It was even so ; and in the first vehement moments of consternation the poor women had the folly to admit that they had placed the greater part of their lives' savings in the hands of Messrs. Maughan and Company, who paid the best percentage they could find any where ; and thus, in all probability, all was lost !

Fortunately for Mr. Bulteel, he had never yet decisively compromised himself in matrimonial overtures to Miss Hortensia, and he was not so alarmed as he might otherwise have been. He kept his head, and gave the best advice in his power : for, having ascertained that Miss Emily Maughan's payments were nearly a year in arrear, owing to a hitherto inexplicable oversight on the part of her sire of late, he recommended that the matter should be broken as gently as possible to that young lady ; that it should be ascertained if she had the meanness to know any thing about what had happened ; and that if, as was likely, she pretended ignorance, Miss Sparx should accompany her home at once to Waveringstone Square, to ascertain the truth of the report, and leave her there. For, in reality, there could be no doubt at all about it, and there was no occasion to increase the debt already outstanding. The Reverend Jabez then partook of lunch, and took his departure, declining, through feelings of the humanest sympathy, which did him honour, to be the medium of conveying such uncomfortable intelligence to the young lady in question ; and thenceforth—probably from an unwillingness to add to housekeeping expenses, which his once liberal hostesses were no longer so well able to afford—came seldomer and seldomer, for a season, to the Sparx Gymgynæcium, until he finally dropped the acquaintance altogether ; having managed things so discreetly, that Miss Hortensia had it not in her power to produce a tittle of evidence, or the smallest scrap of paper—except a volume of crabbedly-written Ms. sermons, which she was copying for him in a fine clear hand—to support an action for breach of promise of marriage. All that accrued to her, therefore, from the transaction was a very common emolument of the British old maid—the conviction that she had been extremely ill-used by a mem-

ber of the opposite sex, and the right thereupon to consider all men the most faithless and unhandsome creatures in the world.

This Emily Maughan, of whom the prattle now is, was a cordial and frank-spoken young creature, whom Made-moiselle Lorient did not like, and whose papa was reported by her to be the kindest and best papa in the world—and also the best and kindest husband ever a mamma had. No great marvel certainly for a man to be so, of supposed great wealth, who had married a very handsome woman for love; but it was to be seen if this matrimonial tenderness would bear the rough winds now likely to be let in upon its paradisiacal bowers. And poor Emily herself was now to receive her first initiation into the ugly-clawed and sorrowful realities of the world, which the golden wand of the fallen Prospero, her sire, had hitherto kept waved at a distance, while only delicate and rosy-winged sprites tripped attendance on her happy hours.

It is true that she did not at first in the least understand the meaning of the thing. Emily, though a banker and a merchant's daughter, had never had occasion hitherto to attach any definite ideas to the terms *speculation* and *failure*, and found the greatest difficulty in bringing herself to comprehend that an English banker, who was supposed to be worth thousands on thousands of pounds, could on a sudden become a beggar, and beggar hundreds with him, in consequence of placing himself at the head of an abortive scheme to carry a railway through the jungles and forests of Central India.

Miss Hortensia, who undertook the task of enlightening this unfortunate pupil on the subject—Miss Sparx declaring herself unequal to the task, and ordering up a knob of sugar and some peppermint, as an excuse for a little good brandy-and-water, which she kept convenient—found Emily busy at her hour's practice on the piano, executing the variations of a popular melody, contrived with a view solely to difficulty, but with a firm and brilliant touch quite equal to the situation;—all which suggested to Miss Hortensia a very clever way of breaking her disastrous tidings.

"If ever you should be *so far reduced*, Miss Maughan," she said, in tones of austere condemnation, "you can *turn governess*. You can play very well, and are perfectly qualified for the position of an assistant of the kind, even in a nobleman's family."

"Oh, how queer of you to say so, Miss Hortensia! Governess, indeed, in a nobleman's family! Papa has often told mamma, laughing, that if I like to marry a young lord, or any thing of that kind, he will *buy me one*. He thinks one can do every thing with money, I do believe, and he has nothing else to do with his; for we are all girls excepting little Robert, who, he says, shall be a great man too, and Prime Minister, like Sir Robert Peel, and all sorts of things, some day," said Emily, still making the keys of the piano fly beneath her fingers, as she passed through the ingenious mazes contrived by Liszt or Herz.

"Then I must say I think it very unhandsome of Mr. Maughan to have deceived and taken in his own child too, if it is the case you know nothing about it," said Miss Hortensia, with irrepressible indignation; and she burst, without further preamble, into as full a revelation of the news as she found it possible to convey to that nursling of affluence and luxury.

But poor Emily began to understand the matter a little better, even before she quitted the scholastic roof, in the course of the afternoon, in the custody of the eldest Miss Sparx, to hasten home and ascertain the worst, no less for that lady's relief than her own.

Her fellow-pupils and companions, who had always hitherto regarded her with the respect due to the daughter of a banker, stared at her as if she had suddenly been struck with some dreadful contagious malady, and showed the undeniable traces of it on her fair young blooming visage. One of the housemaids called her "*Hemily*," *pure et simple*, to her face; and Molly Elders, the cook, who had taken a strong but altogether unfounded suspicion that it was Miss Emily (it was Mademoiselle Loriôt) who had peached about a certain surreptitious party she had given on a level with the area and pantry, said she always

thought that pride would have a downfall—that there was a just judgment on every thing, and that for her part she did not at all wonder that people who turned up their noses at poor servants, and did what they could to injure them, was themselves brought to the same despicable level. All in good time: God pays debts without money; and though she (Molly Elders) was far from wishing Miss Emily ill, she would, perhaps, now find enough to do in her own affairs, without meddling with other people's.

But it was at home, in the magnificently-furnished mansion of her once wealthy sire, that the most tremendous shock of fate awaited poor Emily.

Arriving under charge of the eldest Miss Sparx, in a hired conveyance, both of them were struck by observing all the blinds in the stately abode of wealth and commercial grandeur drawn down closely to the window-sills, and a considerable crowd gathered about the handsome portals. But, in the ignorance and simplicity of the inexperienced arrivants, they thought such an appearance of things was usual in like disasters; and it was not till they had alighted, and were about to knock at the massive doors, that these suddenly opened, and quite a procession of some twelve grave and sad-looking gentlemen, marshalled by a functionary in a cocked-hat, an immense caped coat, and a mace, emerged, and they heard the fatal buzz running among the crowd.

"It's the coroner's jury. They've a-been to see THE BODY, and they are going to sit on it at the Crown."

"No doubt they'll bring it in 'Suicide under extenuating circumstances!'" said a facetious ragged-looking fellow in the throng; "for I don't know what you call *them*, if it isn't when you've a-been a rich banker, and awake some morning without a rap in your pocket, and no taste for backy and beer to comfort you!"

Emily fainted, and was borne into the house, where her mother already lay, and had lain for hours, insensible under the shock of her tremendous bereavement; but to the last hour of her life utterly unable to comprehend how the man, who had seemed to love her dearer than himself ever since he had known her, could bear to leave *her* alone

to ruin and despair—a desolate widow, and the mother of six orphan children—thus !

To do the eldest Miss Sparx bare justice, however, she came out in a most remarkable manner in this awful conjuncture, and for about six hours exerted herself like a true Christian and a tender-hearted woman amidst the calamitous scenes on which she had so suddenly stepped ; in truth, forgot all her own ailments and weaknesses in her endeavour to do some good to these so much more afflicted and unhappy souls around her. But hers were not virtues of stamina to outlast the immediate stimulus of emotion and sympathy ; and when, in the evening, Susannah Sparx left that palace of misery and despair, where the daughter and mother lay moaning and screeching in each other's arms, surrounded by five younger girls and a little boy, who howled for sympathy without knowing at all why, it was with a firm determination not to expose herself again to the terrors and sorrows of such a spectacle.

CHAPTER X.

CI-DEVANT LOVERS.

THESE untoward events were probably the causes why neither of the two bewildered principals of the Sparx Gyn-gynæcium took much notice at the time of certain circumstances which would otherwise have attracted their severest notice and circumspection, had they been brought in proper official form under cognisance.

In the first place, a creature of the most baleful sort known to the heads of seminaries for young ladies, and indeed every other description of guardian of female juvenility—a very handsome young man—had been observed prowling around the Gymgynæcium in a most suspicious and unaccountable manner, unless on the supposition that he was instigated by those wolfish propensities most to be dreaded by the shepherdesses of such-like silly-sooth flocks ; particularly at the hours when it was to be thought, or report might indicate, that the Gymgynæcium sallied forth

on its daily airings and exercises in Kensington Gardens. And, what added to the uncomfortable character of the whole proceeding not a little, this very handsome young man had all the appearance, in addition, of being a foreigner; most probably, from his elegantly-shaped waist (the male British figure, and that of most other nationalities in that division of the human race, seldom presenting to the contemplation any waist at all), a Frenchman. Consequently a personage whose revenues would chiefly lie in his brave spirits and the capital cut and fit of his clothes;—not to mince the matter, who had probably more knobs of sugar than half-crowns in his pockets; therefore, “Anathema Maranatha” for the daughters of wealthy commercial parents.

Madame Fürschener herself, on whom had devolved the duty of parading the young ladies in and out, in safety, after Miss Rosabella’s temporary retirement and Made-moiselle Lorient’s resignation—Madame Fürschener, the most unsuspecting of women, and whose thoughts were always wandering away, from the smooth green lawns and woodlands of Kensington Gardens to the craggy steeps and wind-distraught pine forests, crowned with the eternal snow summits of her native mountains—and chiefly to yonder quiet little nestling churchyard, under a sky-piercing Alp, where lay the husband of her youth, and two little marble figures that had once been living, prattling cherubs at her side—even Madame Fürschener remarked this hovering of the enemy on the skirts of her little host at last; not, it is true, until every girl in the regiment had remarked the fact of the constant reappearance of the foreign gentleman on their line of march, and had pronounced him “Oh, such a beauty of a dear!” and wondered whom of the company he was in love with, and whether he was the French ambassador or not; not until Dowsabella Dollards herself had commented on the brightness of his eyes, and wittily wondered whether he polished them with scouring-powder, and an alderman’s daughter had popularised an opinion that he owed them to the fact of the French having such lots of nice champagne to drink whenever they were thirsty, at home. But by this time

the Maughan calamities had occurred, and the good-hearted Swisswoman felt that it was no time to add to the perplexities and anxieties of her employers.

More acute observers than any of these young damsels or their dreamy conductress might possibly have remarked that the handsome young man had, nevertheless, almost always an aspect of disappointment and surprise succeeding the eagerness of the scrutiny with which—treading off the pavement and holding his well-brushed hat aloft with the politesse of his nation—he passed close along their fluttering, chattering, ribbon-flying ranks, reviewing them with those gleaming Provençal eyes of his.

Why should this be? Miss Madeleine Graham, who was not permitted to stir out of the grounds of the Gymnæcium until a fortnight should consign her to the charge of her *parentèle*, might possibly have guessed, if she had been correctly informed of the circumstance. As it was, she could only form secretly proud conjectures, from hearing the warm discussions of her young companions, as to which of them the homage was addressed, that it was to none of them, but to a far prettier and likelier individual than all put together, but who was unjustly and shamefully secluded by her superiors, and even forced to give herself out as indisposed, and unwilling to share the out-of-doors recreations of the rest of the fair denizens of the Sparx establishment.

However, Madame Fürschener's worst fears, under the responsibility with which she found herself invested, were allayed in a very reasonable manner, a few days after they had begun to develop themselves, and she had resolved to lead her flock quite a different route to their usual one, until this alarming prosecution should cease. The housemaid, who answered the bell, reported that such a fine, handsome, polite young foreigner—who kept his hat off all the time he spoke to her, though he must have seen, by her apron and mob-cap, she was only an upper servant—had called, and asked to see Mademoiselle Loriôt,—no doubt a countryman of hers,—perhaps a relation, or cousin, or something of that kind (Fanny Clavers was herself much addicted to visits from cousins in the Life Guards); for

he seemed *so* disappointed when he heard she was not at home, and wanted so much to know when she might be expected there (which Fanny did not know, and Miss Sparx would not tell), and would a letter left there reach her? Flattered by finding herself treated like a duchess, Fanny said, Of course it would ; and a letter accordingly came, directed to the absent Olympe in a small, excessively neat French hand—which, greatly against her will, and after a severe struggle with a wish to break it open, and ascertain what the correspondence was about, Miss Hortensia re-directed and re-posted, without deigning to pre-pay, to Mademoiselle, at her relative's, in the Arcade Whirlington.

Could this missive have contained a summons which Mademoiselle Loriôt either dared not, or did not think proper, to refuse obedience to? I cannot say, not having read it, for it is one of the few documents connected with this history which have escaped my researches. I think I could have made out more, however, than Miss Hortensia did, if I had had the same chances, and—as she had—a candle to make the envelope transparent ; taking care, of course, not to scorch the paper. But it was the case that, at nine o'clock on a rather windy and wet night, a female form, indifferently well clad but closely veiled, passed before the Marble Arch, with a white pocket-handkerchief, richly scented, in its hand ; and that it was almost immediately afterwards joined by the handsome young foreign Unknown, whom the daughter of the ex-maid-of-all-work, pupil at Rose-Colour House, conjectured, from his resemblance to a figure stepped from the lid of a box of French prunes, to be the representative of his Imperial Majesty the Emperor Napoleon the Third.

“ It is you, Mademoiselle Loriôt ? ” said the Frenchman, in French.

“ It is I, *cher* Camille ! ”

The voice of Mademoiselle Loriôt quivered something of real and, perhaps, in a degree, natural and womanly emotion in the response.

“ Do not call me so ! I forbid you. After the wrongs you have inflicted upon me, I forbid it altogether—now and for ever ! Do you not remember that I am that in-

jured Camille Le Tellier, whom you only failed by the merest chance to involve in a ruinous matrimony, and, as it was, engaged in one of the most disagreeable imaginary discussions with Justice—to say nothing of the horror of a situation which convulsed all France with laughter at my expense?” was the inexorable reply.

Mademoiselle's vanity maxim was correct, at least as regards her own countrymen; and true it is, that to be made ridiculous is the most unpardonable of offences with a Frenchman.

“Merely, Camille! I loved you.”

“I did *not* love *you*—and even the strongest proof of it would be, if I should find it possible to forgive you. But take my arm, and let us walk as we speak, and while I name the conditions on which I consent not to expose your criminality in the eyes of this strict and prudent English society, which, it seems, has received you into the position of an honest and honourable woman—but which would soon change its opinions, if it once heard that you had lost the original luxuriance of your hair—which, I observe, is the case—under the scissors of the matrons of St. Lazare.”

“Your threats would have been more formidable, Camille, a few days ago. At present, I find myself in a condition to dispense with an altogether blameless reputation, if only I could boast any degree of the beauty as a woman which, as a man, *you* can—and do!” replied Mademoiselle, in extremely bitter accents, but taking the arm that was offered her with eagerness.

“It is only to avoid observation!” returned the cautious ex-victim of the impostress of the Jardin Mabille, receiving Mademoiselle into a lifeless and even repulsing link. “Let us proceed across this park, which exults in the statue of Achilles Surprised—to find himself the Duke of Wellington, no doubt!—All is dark and silent here, and no spies of the police are to be dreaded in this innocent England, we are assured.”

“But what do you want with me, Camille, since pardon is impossible!—since you never loved me—never sought my society, except for a supposed wealth, the illusions of which have so long vanished?”

“*Tiens !* I will declare myself without ambages. You are not a woman whose feelings require to be respected too much. Tell me, on the other hand, do you not conceive that you owe me some reparation for the disgraceful intrigue of which you made me almost the victim?”

“I am willing to make you any in my power, my dear Camille ; but if you ask money, alas ! I have none, or so little that Madame Millefleurs, who should have been the most zealous and compassionate of my friends, this very morning exhorted me to lose no time in seeking another location than her house ; whither I have betaken myself unwillingly, as a sole refuge in this vast and sepulchral London, the inhabitants of which should rather be styled its mournful and insensible apparitions.”

“Is it possible you have left the Sparx Gynécée ? why so ?” demanded the handsome prowler around that domicile.

“You were present at the discussion at the *Théâtre St. Jacques*. Why do you ask ? Do you not understand English sufficiently well to have comprehended all that there was disastrous and unforeseen in that unhappy conjuncture ?”

“I speak English well, very well ; I can pronounce the *w's* and the *th's*. I am often mistaken for a native English,” returned the Frenchman proudly, and really now in remarkably English English for a foreigner, continuing, “But the explanation is clear enough. For a long time I travel, in the interests of the various manufacturers that honour me with their confidence, in the three kingdoms.”

“I comprehend. But it is very difficult to speak a language which is a compound of all the languages of the world, and has come down to this excellent Britannic people from the Tower of Babel. Very well. You know, then, all that I know myself in that affair ?”

“I know nothing : I arrived at the end of the discussion ; but it seemed to me that, as usual, you were inculpated with the authorities, represented by the man who handed you a letter, and demanded to know if you had written it.”

"I will explain : in brief, since you have resided in England, you understand the rigidity of manners and etiquette that prevails. Very well. I presume to dispense with the permission of my employers, and accompany a young girl, one of my pupils, who ardently desires the occasion, to a theatre, where a French piece is to be performed, which, at the time I am myself ignorant, is of a moral which even the most ingenious play-writers of this nation—the countrymen of the boasted *SHAXSPERE*, who devote themselves only to the task—have found impossible to adapt to British habitudes. As this young girl is the daughter of parents of great wealth and consideration, I am judged in a high degree culpable, and dismissed from my situation."

"What! that lovely young person who, I saw, distinguished *me* in the *parterre*, the daughter of people of wealth and consideration? *Mon Dieu!* this is news worth hearing. Seeing her with you, I concluded—I concluded quite otherwise, mademoiselle."

"She is what I say; but in what can that concern you, Monsieur Le Tellier?"

"Did you not admit but this very moment, Olympe, that you owed me a great reparation?"

"Ah!" And Mademoiselle Loriôt gave somewhat of a little scream as she uttered the ejaculation.

"Do you not admit it, I say?"

"I admit whatever you wish me to declare; but—ah, Camille, Camille! you cannot have the cruelty—the unmanliness—to—to—What is it you are about to say?"

"The young lady by whom you were accompanied is a familiar acquaintance of yours, you say, in the relations of pupil and instructress? Well, then, I inform you that I am attracted, as I never felt before, by the charms of this young lady's beauty, and I desire an introduction to her above all things—and in a certain light."

"You are attracted, you mean, as you have always been, wretched butterfly! by the golden glare of wealth, in which you pretend to recognise the lustre of a noble sentiment, of which you are incapable!" returned Olympe, with fierce vivacity, and suddenly withdrawing her arm

from that of her accompanier, with a gesture of disdain and malice which would have done honour to a tragedy queen.

"This is the first occasion in which I behold beauty and wealth in a fortunate combination, Mademoiselle Lorient. You yourself only pretended to wealth when you attempted to entrap me as your prey in Paris," the handsome young man replied, with cynical relentlessness and composure.

"Ah, we do not bait traps for jackals with bonbons," exclaimed Olympe.

"I have a case in my pocket; you were always partial to *bonbons* in those other days. Let me offer you some sweetener for your expressions, Mademoiselle," retorted the justly-offended Camille; but, strange to say, actually producing a very pretty enamelled silver comfit-box, and presenting the sugared contents to his still more irritated companion, who, stranger yet, quietly helped herself to three or four candied almonds.

These produced a good effect.

"At present that I am calmer, speak on; explain yourself without hesitation. Alas! I am accustomed to hear little that does not grate on my heart, like the instrument with which they pulverise the nutmeg in the English kitchens;" and Olympe resumed her hold of her former lover's arm.

"I have stated to you that I desire, above all things, an introduction to that charming young miss, the daughter of the most wealthy parents; and adopting a hint from the unhandsome trick you played me in a former time, Olympe, I desire you to introduce me to her as a young Frenchman of distinguished rank and ample inheritance—possibly as a count of the old *noblesse*, on my pleasure in London—if it be possible to imagine pleasure to be sought in a metropolis the bare aspect of which depresses the spirits."

"A count of the old *noblesse*! Ha, ha! No; when she does not care in the least for rank, but attaches her ideas exclusively to money; and in England every species of foreign nobility is derided and despised!" snapped

mademoiselle, with a running laugh through the whole, not unlike the click of an alarm-rattle.

"Then you must introduce me to her as a person of enormous wealth—one of the illustrations of the new empire—a fortunate speculator."

Mademoiselle laughed again in the same manner.

"I shall have to unsay all I have said, then, on your account; for, observing you in the pit at St. Jacques', I took the liberty to boast of the acquaintance, and state exactly who and what you are—Commis-voyageur of a Lyons silk-house, native of Marseilles, with an old father living in a garret in the quarter of the weavers."

"You did?"

"I did."

"And you will not introduce me at all to Miss?—as what I am, *pur et simple*, since you have revealed it?"

Camille uttered this query considerably more in the tone of a menace. Somehow or other, threats always frighten women, especially if they are vague, and unlikely to be executed.

"I cannot, Camille," Olympe replied, in a much-meekened and indeed humbled and deprecatory tone. "I have already told you I have been turned out of my position near this young girl."

"But you yet have influence over her; you yet have means of communication."

"None at all. I have tried to write to her a simple request to forward me a pincushion she had employed herself to work for me, as a souvenir; for she is about to return also to her native province. And the letter has been returned to me unopened, and with the seal scarcely tampered at all with."

"Perhaps, then, she has already returned to her province? I have sought her in vain for days—many promenades—among the pupils of the Sparx Gynécée."

"Ah!"—a cry of physical pain from Mademoiselle Loriôt, which, however, expressed anguish of another kind, rather deeply seated in the moral constitution of her sex.

"Most likely: it is certain!" she then exclaimed, with

vindictive satisfaction. "They have anticipated the fortnight which alone remained to be fulfilled of her half-year's pension; for the English have not the sense to study appearances when they are in a passion."

"But at all events you can tell me where her province is situated—the names of her parents—her own. Do so, or, trust me, I will render it impossible for you to delude any new family into receiving you as an instructress of youth in England; and you know, if the police are sufficiently furnished with your *renseignemens* in France, to render it difficult for you to earn the honest bread which you are *compelled to eat* there."

So spake this handsome young Gaul—a very poor representative of

*"Ces francs Gaulois, aimables et courtois
Envers toutes les femmes, mais surtout
Celles qu'ils aimaient!"*

"I will tell you then," said Olympe, remembering with anguish some passages in a recent conversation she had held with Madame Millefleurs. "She is a native of the humid Ireland, of the North, though of a Scottish descent—of the wealthy and famous city of Belfast."

"Her name?"

"Graham—Madeleine Graham."

"Who is her father?"

"A rich manufacturer of his city who has already been twice its Lord Mayor. No, no; not its *Lord* Mayor; that is only of London. But he is dignified also with a temporary title of nobility, because he is Mayor, when some great public event occurs to distribute honours—Sir Orange Graham, Knight. Madeleine has told me so a thousand times."

"And yet you say she despises rank."

"As the English despise it—to adoration."

"Ah, then, all is well! What joy! Learn, Olympe, that it is specially to this city of the humid Ireland that I am accredited by two of my chief houses, to spread their merchandise," exclaimed Camille, actually executing some steps of a waltz, and compelling his unwilling partner to

join in the evolution, in a manner which excited a degree of unfavourable attention from a man in a complete suit of green, like a grasshopper, with a white band round his hat, and her Majesty's badge on his collar and cuffs.

"*Ah ! cessez donc.* Let me die quietly ! But do you really presume still to cherish designs on the daughter of a wealthy British manufacturer, who is also of the temporary nobility of this haughty Albion ?"

"Am I not of a figure and general appearance to justify some confidence in my resources, Mademoiselle Loriôt ?" said the handsome young man, drawing himself up under a gaslamp in an attitude, the supreme conceit of which could not, nevertheless, obliterate much of the fact that he *was* a remarkably handsome-looking foreigner.

Mademoiselle Loriôt glared at him for a moment, with eyes in which shone several opposite feelings at the same instant—contempt, admiration, hatred—and a still more unwomanly sentiment than all, which we will not desecrate the word by calling Love ; and then these passions seemed to fuse like glowing metals into one, compounded of all, but different *from* all ; and she pronounced—or rather hissed like a serpent—these memorable words—"Go, then, Camille Le Tellier, and woo Madeleine Graham to be your bride ; and learn, in your turn, with what hardness and insensibility the human heart is armed, into which the Thirst of Gold has entered, like a master-demon into the frame of the possessed one—expelling all the others, but rending and lacerating the wretched breast itself in which it finds a home !"

CHAPTER XI.

A GIRL IN BLACK.

MR. BEHRINGBRIGHT sat in his office, in a dark chamber of a dark court, separated by its gloomy, ill-paved space from a vast roaring thoroughfare of London City, down which constantly thundered one of the great cataract streams of traffic, with its jostling, struggling, headlong

roll of mingled mercantile humanity and omnibuses. Nevertheless, a silence which almost stunned people stepping out of that prodigious tumult, reigned in the great merchant's precincts, and kept a sort of guard upon his money-making meditations. Clerks shuddered if they heard their own pens scratching on the thick ledger paper, and elderly captains and centurions of the same, in ill-made brown trousers, with pale, thin, arithmetical heads, partially encased in high collars and chokers, and almost to a head bald, stepped on tiptoe as they passed in and out of the sanctum sanctorum, transmitting the commands of their laconic chief.

"We will take Spurzheim and Olaf's consignment of wheat from the Baltic, Barnstaple.—Mr. Milroy, Ruiz Alarcos's sherry-warrants are not a sufficient security for the cargo he wants us to furnish him for Gibraltar.—I have not had time, Freshwater, to examine the offers of the house at Pernambuco you mention.—Are those acceptances of the Maughans of Calcutta looked after, Mr. Baillie?"

The great merchant's cranium was evidently divided into pigeon-holes—at least it seemed as if he had separate compartments in it for a hundred different kinds of business arrangements.

"Yes, sir."

The last person spoken to was the only one of the four head-clerks in attendance who made any audible reply: all the rest merely signified comprehension and obedience by jerks of the head, passing in procession, with heavy tomes under their arms, before their evocator, like the shadowy kings from the witches' caldron in *Macbeth*.

Mr. Behringbright said no more at that time to any one, but taking up the *Times*, began, as it seemed, to peruse the leading article.

It was only in seeming; for surely the *Times* could not have contained a leading article to the following effect:

"What a pretty girl she was!—very young—very young. Rich black glossy hair, a fine complexion, rosy with youth and health; splendid eyes! Utterly uncon-

scious, evidently, of that dreadful Frenchwoman's designs; for with what an innocent childishness of attention she kept those lustrous eyes fixed on that stupid curtain! To be sure there was nothing particularly attractive in a gray old iron-pot head like mine opposite. I don't think she ever looked once at my box, and that shows it is impossible she could have been at all in the plot. And yet it was queer, too, what Digby tells me, that she declared at once the letter *was* in the handwriting of the wretch of a *gouvernante*, although it was only a copy from Fauntleroy's recollection of the words and penmanship, as I was such a donkey as to burn the original before I remembered that it would be necessary as evidence. However, he boasts that he can imitate a handwriting so well that he hopes he shall never come upon a blank cheque-book of mine, or it will, he fears, bring him to grief. I will take care he shall not. It is bad enough to lend him one's money, and regulate the amount. No doubt the poor young creature, in her flurry, made sure she recognised the niggling French caligraphy. What a danger she ran! What *might* have happened if I had been a rascal like most other fellows, and taken the goods the gods—no, the devil—provided! No; I am very glad I managed the affair as I did. A good conscience is a pleasant thing, and, in fact, I don't think one can attend properly to business with a bad one. How could one calculate the value of a cargo of Odessa wheat, for example, with a brain full of all sorts of wicked plots and contrivances? It is even very difficult to fix one's attention properly on business when one's inner man is agitated by the very best of feelings—and all that; and besides, I have had enough of women and their ways to last one man's life. To be sure, I married *them* for money! But for what else, I wonder, should I expect any woman to take a fancy for me now at my time of life, with hair as mottled as a partridge's breast, and crow's-feet clawing in the corners of my eyes as if they meant to dig them out? Dull gray eyes, too! I am not such an ass as to fancy it possible any woman—above all, a young girl in the first lustre of her own beauty and attraction—could marry me

for any thing but my money ! And if I only wanted to be loved for my money, there are plenty of charming young creatures—of high rank and lineage, too—who are ready to do that—or say they do so at the altar. Mademoiselle is mistaken, however, concerning the fair Incognita. To do that lady bare justice, she does not pretend to the slightest regard or respect for me ; and it is time also to finish that outrageous farce. She is discontented, forsooth, because I furnish her with any amount of this coveted gold—to show the contempt I myself have for it, and for her, and for the vile mobs of high and low, whom its flaunt and glare have amazed and dazzled into an applause and acquiescence which stamp the age—and yet despise and shun her personally. I will send her a note to-day for a thousand pounds, inform her that I am aware of her partiality for my Lord Ninnington, and that I beg henceforth to resign her society in his favour. There will be another villanous creature of the sex properly served out, for Ninnington is little better than a beggar, and a fortnight of this madwoman's extravagance will make him a complete one.—And so perhaps, after all, I am not such a good fellow as I try and persuade myself I am in this transaction ? It may be merely the bitter recollections I cherish of *that woman* which make me thus impenetrable and hardhearted towards all of her crafty and faithless kind !”

“Beg pardon, sir, for interrupting you,” said the staid, lugubrious tones of one of the principal clerks, who at this moment thrust his cadaverous-looking head into the room, where it glared from its spare upholding framework over the rails of Mr. Behringbright's desk, almost like a decapitation on a pike in the heyday of Robespierre and Danton—“Beg pardon, but there's a *young lady in black* asking to see you. Can't make it out, but she comes on most particular business, she says. Shall I show her in ? or shall I say—you are engaged ?”

“A *young lady in black*, Wrightson ?”

And the merchant's mind, steadily fixed on the right and proper, as he deemed it, suddenly startled up with something like an emotion of hopeful expectation in con-

nection with the words, that would scarcely have analysed exactly into such component parts.

"Yes, sir; about seventeen, I should say."

"What can she want?"

"She says she must see you, sir, to-day—*must* see Mr. Behringbright himself," said Mr. Wrightson; a head-clerk of the most correct principles, having a wife, a grandmother, ten children, and two hundred and fifty pounds a-year to keep him a model of virtue in his proper person, but who was not unaware that richer people sometimes deviated from the standards of propriety.

"What's her name?"

"Won't give it, sir. Says, in point of fact, she's afraid you wouldn't see her if she did."

"Does she? That's candid, at all events. She can't even be seventeen, I should say, Mr. Wrightson.—Who's with her?"

"No one, sir."

"No one?"

"Not any body, sir."

"Queerer yet. But perhaps that French she-devil is lurking about somewhere! No, it won't do. The Song of the Sirens is all very fine, but I see the drowned corpses festering deep down in the depths of the green-rosy sea!"

"Sir!—you see—you see *what*?" ejaculated the head-clerk, fairly aghast at such an observation.

"Ah, you have not had the advantages of a liberal education, Wrightson! You know *I* was originally designed for a parliament man, so of course I learned all the proper claptrap quotations. Say I *am* engaged on most important business, and—and can't be interrupted, especially by a person who gives no name, and will not say what she comes about!—She isn't the innocent, harmless young creature I took her for, and Digby himself is ready to take his *davy*, he says, she is, from her conduct in the transaction," sighed Mr. Behringbright, in conclusion.

"Yes, sir."

"Wrightson!"

"I understand, sir."

"No, you don't. Say I am in, and—and disengaged

for a few minutes. I don't know what she can want, but perhaps it's something about a—a little occurrence that took place at a theatre where I was the other night. There was a sort of row, and a policeman took up some woman, and I saw it. And there was another of them in it who was not to blame, and perhaps my evidence may be required in her behalf. Don't you hear? You stand as if you were turned into a statue! Show the young lady in,—and be ready to show her out again in a couple of minutes, for I have no time to waste this morning on the rubbish women talk, at best,—and this was a squabble at a theatre."

Mr. Wrightson smiled a smile equivalent to a gleam of sunshine on ice, and disappeared.

"If it be as I think, I never will believe in the harmless looks of mortal woman creature again!" said the mercantile misogynist, as his attendant retired. "It is plain enough what Wrightson thinks; but he is so good himself, he thinks evil of every body else. Oh, but won't I give this naughty girl an annihilating reception if *she* can by possibility have undertaken to carry out her odious preceptress's plan?"

In spite of this excellent resolution, I do not positively know or affirm that Mr. Behringbright was not considerably disappointed, as well as surprised, when, the door opening, admitted a very young person,—of the feminine better half of creation certainly, but of a taller and more slender figure than Madeleine Graham's full rounded outlines: with a fine face, no doubt, but one absolutely colourless; with fair hair in plain bands, instead of black glossy waves; and eyes red and swollen round the edges, so as almost to destroy the effect of the clear blue, translucent, tender-souled, and pathetic visual orbs, which did not recall the diamond-bright but diamond-impenetrable glance of the siren of the previous adventure. And the general doleful effect of this exhausted and woebegone figure was heightened by a mourning dress of inferior and carelessly run-together stuff, which was little more fashioned than the garb of a Sister of Mercy in the streets.

Mr. Behringbright perceived at once that he had never

seen this young person before; and his look expressed that, as well as the feelings previously hinted at, as he rose to receive his visitor, with a good deal more than the average counting-house politeness to strangers.

The Girl in Black evidently comprehended this part of the position, at all events, for she stammered out some faint, unintelligible apology for the intrusion, and seating herself, or rather sinking into a chair, which Mr. Behringbright instinctively hastened to offer her—to his immense dismay, immediately fainted away in it.

“Good heavens! she is going to tumble on the floor. I must support her.—What will the clerks think? Wrightson, for goodness’ sake open the window, if you can; the young woman has fainted. You can’t! Fan the door, then, only don’t let the other clerks—Who on earth can she be? and what can she want? Stop! she’s coming to. You need not open the door.”

Mr. Wrightson looked as the father of ten children, on two hundred and fifty pounds a-year, paid punctually quarterly, ought to look—as if he thought his employer was very much to blame in the transaction, but that it was not his business to intimate so much in any shape or form whatever—and he did *not* open the door.

Meanwhile Mr. Behringbright humanely supported the young lady in her chair, assiduously fanning her himself, with his hat, snatched from the desk.

“She’s better now, and I’d better leave them to themselves. I suppose they don’t want me to hear their explanations,” muttered the head-clerk, preparing to retire, as he witnessed the return to consciousness of the mysterious visitant. But Mr. Behringbright rather unpolitely ordered him to remain.

“You are an ass, Wrightson, I tell you!” he said, fiercely; “and you shall stop, and see that you are one.”

And, indeed, as soon as the poor girl could find a broken utterance to express her meaning and purpose in so strange a visitation, Mr. Wrightson, at all events, acknowledged the injustice of his suspicions, though it would be too much to require of any biped so full an admission

of quadrupedal standing as was implied in the above intimation.

She stated that her name was Maughan—Emily Maughan; that her father was Maughan, Maughan and Company; that her mother was nearly dead with grief, and incapable of doing or saying any thing; that poor papa was to be buried; that they had no relations in England to apply to; and she—Emily—was obliged to try and do it all herself, though her heart was broken too.—Only five little orphans, all younger than herself, in the family.—But the execution people that had been put in the house on his—Mr. Behringbright Brothers'—suit had taken possession of all the money in the place; and—and the undertakers, hearing every thing was seized upon, would none of them agree to bury poor papa, unless—unless they might be allowed, through his goodness, only *ten pounds* out of the money found in poor papa's purse, to—to—— But then sobs and hysterical emotion rendered what should have followed unintelligible.

“What is the meaning of all this, Wrightson?” exclaimed Mr. Behringbright, considerably bewildered.

“Didn't you see in the paper this morning, sir, that Ichabod Maughan, of the firm of Maughan, Maughan and Co., of Threadneedle Street and Calcutta—”

“I haven't seen the paper, man alive, to look at it!—What has happened?”

“He had a grand party on the very night, sir, and shot himself in his bedroom, while the footmen were putting out the waxlights. The jury brought it in ‘Temporary insanity;’ but it ought, in my opinion—”

“D—n your opinion! God bless me! I haven't heard a word about it. But what is it she says about an execution, and—and all that?”

“That's Mr. Baillie's department, sir; of course we got judgment on the protested bills, and are the execution creditors.”

“Are we indeed?” said Mr. Behringbright, quite aghast at the intelligence.—“My poor girl, I will not only see to your being furnished with sufficient funds to——No; I will myself undertake whatever ought to be done to give

your unhappy parent decent interment. And, believe me, though it was done in the usual course of business, without my having any degree of personal action in the matter, no one in the whole world can regret more than I do the rash deed into which the pressure put upon him has probably driven your unfortunate father."

"No, sir," said Mr. Wrightson, "we did not come in till next day. Baillie lives in the neighbourhood, and heard of the transaction early on the morning after, and thought we had better go in at once for what we could get, as there were certain to be plenty after. And we were only half an hour before Lazarus Goldbar's man."

"Yes, yes, it was the night before—just after the ball—when poor papa—You were not at all to blame, sir; you had a right! He only went upstairs first, and kissed poor little Robert in his bed—and then—God for ever bless you, sir, if you will let us only have enough to bury poor papa!"

Mr. Behringbright made no reply, but something that was not very unlike a stifled sob rose under his waistcoat, and half choked him in an effort to repress. Then, finding that Emily could now retain her seat without support, he left her suddenly, and flew to an antique triangular cupboard which stood in a corner of the apartment. Thence he returned with a decanter of wine and a goblet in either hand; filling which latter half full, he insisted that Miss Maughan should swallow the contents at once. She could only, however, sip at the edges; and Mr. Behringbright, finding himself more agitated than he exactly liked, emptied the vessel at a quaff when she handed it quivering back.

Such was the first interview between George Cocker Behringbright and Emily Maughan—but not the last.

The wealthy merchant seemed touched with a kind of remorse for a catastrophe in which he nevertheless felt himself to be as innocent of all art and part as the rules of trade, and legal procedure on dishonoured bills, could possibly permit. He himself escorted Emily back to her mournful home, darkened by the horrible event which had taken place within its once gay and joyous walls. He

would have dismissed the officers in possession of the house and effects, under the judgment his subordinates had secured, had it not been clearly demonstrated to him that their departure would only give the signal for a ruder invasion, on the part of half a score of disappointed functionaries of the same species. And he relieved her by his personal offices from all necessity of further interference in the dismal duty of consigning her rash-handed sire to his eternal rest from bills, and banking, and railroads through the lurking-places of tiger and serpent. Nay, Mr. Behringbright's benevolence towards the bereaved family of his escaped debtor stopped not there; albeit so many of us arrogate to ourselves that portion of the Divine attributes which avenges the sins of the father on the children. For Mr. Behringbright interested himself, greatly more than even in his quality of creditor for a very considerable amount he otherwise might, in the winding-up of the affairs of the banking firm whose main pillar had so unhand-somely withdrawn, and thus allowed the whole ruin to crumble hopelessly in. He pretended to make the widow and her children an allowance from the estate during this process—though any thing of the sort was refused in an indignation meeting of the creditors,—supplying the deficiency from his own purse; and when he could no longer veil his generosity under this delicate cover, he asked Mrs. Maughan to oblige him by the acceptance of a hundred and fifty pounds a-year, until her little boy could be educated, and be of age to take a seat in his office, and repay the *outlay by his services*. And the merchant made this request with such blushing hesitation and confusion, that Mrs. Maughan, who had been brought up a beauty, faintly revived from her widowed dejection to a notion that her matronly charms were still appreciated, and that in all probability she had made a conquest of the wealthy Behringbright, Brothers, himself!

But, truth to say, that man of money was guarded in his triple-plated armour of suspicion and incredulity and experience against far fresher and more seductive, though most innocent and scarcely conscious, influences of attraction.

Perhaps, indeed, we have no right to surmise that such were in reality essayed on him, or that any warmer feeling than the deepest gratitude and admiration for the manly and noble qualities of the plain-featured but magnanimous and tender-hearted merchant had entered the youthful bosom of Emily Maughan at this period. But we are forced to admit that Mr. Behringbright himself grew to remark, with pain and alarm, the brightening of the cheek and eye of the young girl whenever he entered her presence,—the candid simplicity of joy and affection that broke out as it were in beams all over her fair and innocent face when he addressed the most casual observation to her. Possessed with the notion that it was impossible for any woman to prefer him to all mankind for himself alone, and that the whole sex was animated by sordid and ambitious motives, and was of so false and dissembling a nature, that it was absurd to place any stress on its external demonstrations, of whatever kind, Mr. Behringbright saw in these signs only the evidences of a natural appreciation, on the part of a modern young lady reduced from affluence to poverty, of his value as a *moneyed man*. It is true that at the same time he discerned a brave directness and candour of spirit in all Emily Maughan said or did, which seemed at variance with the supposition that she was capable of the insidious meanness his fancy imputed to her. But distrust and suspicion of the whole sex had become a solid foundation of prejudice in his mind, on which to erect every superstructure that could be devised of the sort, and from whose battlemented towers his imagination kept a perpetual and restless watch.

To all this we may add that the brilliant and voluptuous vision of Madeleine Graham, in the fulness and richness of her early-developed beauty, swam vaguely before Mr. Behringbright's mental vision still, and paled those soft and ineffectual charms on which his actual optics might rest at will.

Not that the former had made upon him an impression of a strongly commanding and energetic character; for Mr. Behringbright took no further interest apparently of any sort in either the persons or circumstances of his adventure

at the Théâtre St. Jaques ; made no inquiries, and accepted the carefully-weighed and meted-out information on the subject of Madeleine Graham which his detective transmitted, without analysis or insistence of any kind ; though we are afraid Miss Hortensia Sparx indulged in the figure of rhetoric styled Metonymy—by which places and things are put for others, the cause for the effect, the subject for the adjunct—in the account with which she favoured that agent of justice concerning the young lady's birth, parentage, and place of residence when at home.

The senseless coquetry of the spoilt beauty, mother of Emily Maughan, succeeding so soon upon her husband's tragedy, also contributed to disgust and annoy Mr. Behringbright to a very high degree, and confirm all his contempt and apprehension of the ill designs and mercenary tendencies of the women of his time. He saw her settled comfortably with her younger children (three he sent to school) in a pretty cottage in the salubrious district of Peckham Rye, and then began to fall off very perceptibly in his complimentary visits ; finally dropping them altogether, to the prodigious astonishment and incredulity of the silly, weak-minded woman who had taken him so pleasantly and rapidly into the calculations of her widowhood.

Even when Emily wrote some time after, very coldly though most respectfully, to Mr. Behringbright, to beg him to interest himself in procuring her a situation as a governess, that she might be enabled to become an assistance instead of continuing a burden on the resources his generosity supplied to her family, he took it into his possessed brain that it was a ruse to bring him to a declaration of a kind of partiality, the germs of which he was not unconscious might exist in his bosom, but which he was determined should never grow up into a harvest for cupidity and craving of the kind he imputed to this poor girl. Willing also to extinguish any species of hope she might have formed on the subject, he not only complied with the request, but in a manner which evinced any thing but a desire on his part to oppose Emily's apparent project of removing herself from his possible presence and

association. He offered her a situation with a friend of his own in Ireland—a lady of rank, who had been left a widow with two children, of whose extensive inheritance Mr. Behringbright had accepted the guardianship, under the will of their late father, who had been a particular friend of his; though he disliked the post very much, and had endeavoured to excuse himself from it on the plea of the multiplicity and absorbing nature of his own affairs. The younger of these children was a little girl, just of age to require instruction; and this was the pupil destined for Miss Emily Maughan's superintendence.

Mr. Behringbright had a vague notion that Emily would decline the offer; perhaps he had even a still vaguer wish that she would do so. He certainly did not represent it under the most alluring aspects. Lady Glengariff, he stated, was an invalid, labouring under ~~an~~ incurable and very distressing form of malady, who resided in complete seclusion in a dismal old manor-house among the mountains of Kerry. The climate was watery and uncertain; Miss Maughan would live surrounded by a wild and sometimes dangerously impulsive and ignorant population; her only, or at least her chief, companion would be a child of eight or nine years of age. The heir of the family, Lord Glengariff, was a youth still under age, had entered the army, and of course was mostly away. Mr. Behringbright certainly added, that if she could make up her mind to these inconveniences, a liberal salary would be apportioned to her, which would enable her to contribute, as she so dutifully desired, to her mother and family's comforts, and the retrieval of their position in the world.

In short, it was a little to the kind patron's chagrin that this uninviting (in most respects) situation was most readily and gratefully accepted.

He went to see the Maughans, and to make Emily some little parting present for her expenses, with the letter of introduction to her new patroness. And he *was* rather perplexed and touched to find her looking unusually pale and thin; and even his well-seasoned incredulity sustained rather a hard strain when he observed—which he could not help—how a scarlet flush of excitement mantled

over all that paleness, and the blue loving eyes shone up humid with tears, as he pressed the young girl's hand kindly in farewell, and expressed his hope that he should hear good tidings of her occasionally through her mother, or little brother, who had become under his auspices a Blue-coat boy. But it was no time for regret or recall, even if he had felt decisively inclined that way, which was far from being the case. And so they parted—Emily to prepare immediately for her departure to the south of Ireland, and Mr. Behringbright to return to his self-appointed task-work of converting every thing he touched to hard, unenjoyable, unpalatable gold.

CHAPTER XII.

WESTWARD HO !

ON reflection, it does not strike one as very singular that Mr. Behringbright should cherish so great an antipathy to being loved—we beg pardon, married—for his money. To say nothing of his previous domestic experience of the delights of an union contracted under the auspices of Plutus, there is certainly some principle in the human mind which indisposes it to this species of bargain and sale. It is true that it is easily overcome when reason is once permitted to raise her voice in the question; especially among the female portion of modern mankind. The days of romance seem to be as thoroughly over there as the most inexorable of fathers or wealthy of uncles of the old school could possibly desire, speaking as to the fact in general. Nevertheless, there may be some exceptions, as the progress of this truthful history may perhaps demonstrate. But at present it is through Mr. Behringbright's organs of vision we contemplate the sex; a little jaundiced, no doubt, from an indigestion of matrimony, but on the whole but too faithful and discouraging to any renewal of appetite.

What but this species of obstinately-rooted prejudice could have preserved this wealthy merchant (who, like all great woman-haters, was at heart devoted to the sex) against

all the thousand charms and allurements lavishly paraded in his way, and have enabled him so constantly to elude the fling of those wreaths of artificial roses and eglantine from the legions of white-armed nymphs who danced before him constantly in the mazes of society, and took every imaginable chance to hoop him over into those scentless and only gaslamp-blooming circlets? For there were plenty who tried at it, both before and after this little mysterious episode of Emily Maughan—which Mr. Behringbright himself sometimes felt as if he did not quite understand. Rank, beauty, fashion, occasionally even largely-endowed sharers in the magnetic influence he did and did *not* enjoy in his proper person, were amongst the figurantes in this sorrowful ballet. But still, like the chaste Prince of the adventure of the Valley of False Delights, Mr. Behringbright drew his golden-tissued mantle tighter and tighter round him, and manfully held on his way, avoiding every path, however flower-bestrewn, that seemed to have a tendency to debouch at the portals of St. George's, Hanover Square.

Meanwhile time elapsed, and Mr. Behringbright could not have been supposed to have grown any younger, or to feel any increase of confidence in his unaided personal resources to win the genuine favour of the fair, two years after the date of the period when the reader first made his acquaintance in these pages, at the Dolce-Far-Niente Club. About that interval had taken place, I find, when one evening, just before the closing of Parliament, Mr. Behringbright walked into the great room of the club, looking towards the intended bas-reliefs of the statue of Nelson, with a newly-purchased tourist's knapsack in his hand, a helmet-of-Mambrino-looking wide-awake on his head, a thick crabstick, with a bayonet-spring handle, tucked under his arm, and attired in a complete suit of strong brown, serviceable-looking tweed, and knickerbockers. The club-porter himself, accustomed as he was to the eccentricities of costume on the part of the gentleman who made him the handsomest Christmas-gift of the year, hardly recognised his patron on this occasion, and was about to ask his business as a stranger, when he re-

cognised the voice and civility that addressed one of the waiters.

"Have you a Bradshaw convenient, Mr. Dobson? I want to look at it; the one that has the steamboats and all that in it too, you know."

"Yes, sir; the thick sixpenny."

The "thick sixpenny" was produced, and Mr. Behringbright, tucking his stick tighter yet under his arm, turned the luminous pages over in search of the information he required.

"What can Mr. Behringbright be after now?" said one of the *habitués* to another.

"Can't imagine. But itn't he funny to look at?" replied the person addressed, putting up his eye-glass, and surveying the figure engaged in looking over the Bradshaw with as much interest and curiosity as a naturalist might some new species of animal.

"Just like Don Quixote starting on his second sally; for he looks deuced ill and out of sorts, as if he was hardly quite well yet of his stoning by the galley-slaves," rejoined Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy. "But it don't much matter to any body but himself, I should think, where he goes, how he looks, or what becomes of him, such a greedy old curmudgeon as he has grown, with all those acres of bank-notes and mountains of bullion of his."

A coldness had arisen of latter times between the wit and moneyed man, in consequence of the latter getting tired even of so clever a person's, and who was fast becoming a political celebrity's, autograph, in the shape of I O U's.

"What's he asking Dobson?"

"Mr. Dobson, you're cleverer than I am if you can find me out what train I must take on the London and North-Western to catch the next Belfast steamer," said Mr. Behringbright, throwing the "Guide" over to the waiter, who stood expecting orders; after vainly puzzling for a time over columns that not unfrequently suggest to the human mind the humbling conviction that there's nothing more difficult of comprehension than what appears easiest.

"Belfast! Do you hear that? Going to buy a ship-load of linens, I suppose," said Mr. Fauntleroy, sulkily.

"But I thay, Vivian, ithn't Belfast in Ireland? Mayn't he be going to Killarney, like every body elth this year, to see the Meeting of the Waterth, and all that thentimental business? That'th a thort of thing every fellah mutht do, you know."

"I should think he would go to Dublin or Cork for that; and in his own yacht, most likely. No, he's going to Belfast on some nasty money-scraping business, no doubt; and he likes to make his bargains looking as hard up as he possibly can, to get the people to let him have things cheaper," said Mr. Fauntleroy.

"What a screw!"

"Dobson has found him what he wants, and I declare he has tipped him half-a-sovereign for his pains," remarked another member, who was apparently reading a newspaper in a frame, but who was doing no such thing, but attending to every thing else to be seen or heard in the room; only preventing other people from usurping the place.

"He spoils all the servants for us poor devils!" muttered Mr. Vivian F.

"He's going now. No, he is turning back. What is it about?"

"Mr. Dobson, if any letters come for me after the end of this week, will you post them to me at Glengariff Castle, Gap of Dunloe, County Kerry?—Put Ireland on it too, for fear of a mistake."

"Yes, sir; it is in the books punctual already; you was there three years ago."

"So I was—at poor Glengariff's funeral. What a memory you have, Mr. Dobson! Wouldn't *you* pass a 'Civil Service examination now! Good-morning, Sir Charles; I'm off for Ireland in half an hour."

"Ireland! Where's that?"

"In the Atlantic."

"Good shooting the part you're going to?"

"No; some hares and lots of stags; but rather too big a country."

"*Ben voyage!*"

“Thank you—I hate French; and I am almost sure to be sea-sick.”

Exit George Cocker Behringbright on his travels.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LETTER.

MR. BEHRINGBRIGHT's true motives for leaving London on an Irish trip are, however, contained in the following letter :

“Glengariff Castle, Co. Kerry,
July —, 18—.

“DEAREST AND MOST VALUED FRIEND,—You will, in all probability, be greatly surprised, and no less grieved, at the extraordinary piece of disastrous intelligence which I am obliged to communicate to you, as the only person on whose sound judgment and unshaken friendship I know I can at all times rely. As the sole guardian of my son, also, in his nonage, although he has now attained what the law so erroneously calls the age of discretion, and as the benevolent protector and patron (which I have always been assured, from every source, you are) of the unfortunate young woman whom you recommended under my roof, and whose name is likely to be most unpleasantly associated with that of the house of Glengariff, I implore your interposition!

“It is now nearly two years, as you must very well remember, since Miss Emily Maughan first became an inmate of Glengariff Castle, in the capacity in which you had recommended her, of governess to my daughter, Lady Gwendoline. She came to us with a testimonial under your hand, than which it would have been impossible, I should think, any thing more flattering, and calculated to conciliate every species of esteem, could be conceived. And notwithstanding my present unhappy convictions, I must add that, however lavish the eulogium, it seemed more than justified in the person and qualities of the amiable young girl who presented herself with your letter of

recommendation, but with a still stronger one written in her modest and ingenuous countenance, at Glengariff Castle, two years ago. The mildness of her temper, in combination with a decision and energy of character, remarkable in several instances that called for the exercise of those qualities very shortly after her arrival here, were found fully equal to all you reported. In particular, I may mention that, although I was seized with a paroxysm of my frightful mental malady, with shocking unexpectedness, one day in Miss Maughan's presence—before she had obtained the least inkling of the dreadful secret of my mournful and secluded existence,—although, in fact, I must declare that, overcome with the horror of THE VISION (you know, alas! too well what those fearful words veil), I rushed to the edge of the rocks over the Eagle's Crag, and was about to hurl myself headlong into the lake,—she seemed to comprehend the tremendous fact with a single dart of intuition, rushed after, seized me by the hair of my head, tore me back, and held me through the most powerful convulsive efforts of my, to be sure, much-shattered and enfeebled frame, until assistance arrived. No doubt, I am willing to admit, Miss Emily Maughan saved my life by her presence of mind and undaunted courage on this occasion; for there was no one else at hand to preserve me from the terrible impulse, which came on at an unusual season and hour, or I should have had my faithful giantess Norah in attendance night and day, as is my wont. And I do not deny that I owe to Miss Emily Maughan a debt of gratitude; to pay which, however, it cannot be that I am called upon to sacrifice the honour of the princely line of the O'Donoghues of Glengariff, of whom my son is the last representative!

“I say nothing of the fine talents and accomplishments of your *protégée*, except that they fully equalled what you had led us to expect. Gwendoline, who is a slow and torpid child, it cannot be denied, improved rapidly under her care. The little girl took a fancy to her preceptress, who certainly has something peculiarly engaging and attractive in her whole person and demeanour, the secret of which it is not easy to discover. I cannot say that I

consider her as what one may style regularly beautiful in the countenance ; she has a charming expression, a look of clear honesty and integrity—which it does one good to see—a lovely fair complexion, and an elegant figure. But when you have said this, you have said all ; and I cannot in the least understand the infatuation of my son, unless on a supposition too dreadful to be dwelt upon, that the hereditary malady of our race——But no ; I will not suffer myself to adopt so fearful a conclusion, and will continue to hope every thing from the ascendancy which the calm sagacity and resolute determination of character that have always marked the dearest friend of my late husband, will also doubtless secure him over his wayward son.

“I need not now repeat what I have written to you so often—though the correspondence on your part has necessarily, from the multitude of your avocations, been limited to very general acknowledgments—concerning the rapid advance made by Miss Maughan in the good graces of my entire household and of the wild but generous and loving-hearted race who dwell, as their progenitors have dwelt, around the home of my ancestors. With me also, I readily admit, she speedily established herself in the warmest favour and approbation. There was no visible drawback, and I did not suspect deception in one so young, and so replete, in appearance, with candour and every kindly sensibility. Or if any thing of the sort existed, it lay, perhaps, in the fact that, for a considerable time after her arrival among us, there was something of a pensive abstraction and sadness to be remarked in Miss Maughan’s demeanour, which at times almost suggested to me the notion that there were regrets of the heart and affections over-shadowing her young existence, independent of the sorrowful incidents of her starting in life of which you had placed me in possession. But it was not an oppressive or a gloomy cloud—rather one of those soft, silvery exhalations which arise from the bosom of our lakes in the heat of summer, and throw that dreamy shadowing of splendour that gives so peculiar a magic to the beauty of our scenery. It suited me well, besides : the presence of youth, brilliant and vivacious with its customary high

spirits and insensibility to the sufferings of others, would have jarred inconceivably on my unstrung and quivering nerves. As it was, Emily Maughan seemed to have in her nature some gift of soothing and sway over mine, that even proved powerfully influential for good in the severest crises of my malady,—an influence which I might, perhaps, liken to that of the inspired minstrel of Israel over his similarly-afflicted king, but which has also been of as baneful consequence on the general fortunes of my house!

“But to make myself intelligible. Last summer, as you are well aware, my son, Lord Glengariff, attained his majority. I think it was against your advice, but upon his own earnest wish, that he was indulged with leave of absence from his regiment, and returned to celebrate the event among his prosperous and devoted tenantry,—prosperous, thanks to your most admirable management and care, and by ways and means which my own and my husband’s riotous and headlong ancestry had never deemed compatible with the wild habits of our people. You saw Ferdinand just before he returned to us; so you will not impute it altogether to a mother’s partiality for an only son, when I state that in my eyes he appeared the very perfection of noble and manly grace,—a soldier and a gentleman in all he said, did, and looked; gallant and gay; witty and poetical in his language and temperament;—a youthful chieftain worthy indeed to be the last representative of the most illustrious of ancient Irish races! You may judge, therefore, whether any confidence is to be placed in the pretended refusal and withdrawal of this young girl, the daughter of a ruined mercantile family; and whether it is not, on the contrary, a refinement of artifice to secure to herself so splendid a prize and elevation of rank as the frenzied passion of my son has, I am led to believe, placed at the option of Emily Maughan!

“For, not to prolong so painful a recital, and so wounding to every species of just pride and tenderness in the breast of a mother, I must inform you, my dear *Baron* [this word was, however, obliterated, and *my dear Mr. Behringbright* followed on], that almost immediately after his arrival, it is extremely probable, my son began to im-

bibe the insensate passion which is likely to cause us all so much trouble. I myself noticed, though at the time without misgiving, that at the grand fête which we gave in celebration of the majority to, I may say, the entire county, he led out my daughter's governess more than once before all the assembled nobility and gentry, and particularly insisted on dancing the last country-dance with her for his partner. But as he also danced jigs with half a score of peasant-girls, and his foster-sister, Norah's daughter, I looked upon it (as other people, I suppose, did at the time) as a piece of high-born condescension and popular gallantry, well befitting the youthful chieftain of Glengariff; and my mother's heart was so delighted with the praises of the young man's free and graceful manners, that I have no doubt I shared unsuspiciously in the general opinion that Lord Glengariff never showed to more advantage throughout the fête than when he had for his partner the fair young Sassenach from beyond the bitter sea!

"Nothing of special moment occurred for a considerable time after to open my eyes. Glengariff is so secluded a spot of the world,—my long illness and widowhood have so removed me from intimate association with our few equals, separated from us by wide circuits and rough mountain roads,—that the constant association into which the young people were thrown, in my presence, gave me no uneasiness. Indeed, I should as soon have dreamed of the formation of an honourable attachment between the Chief of Glengariff and a governess, as of any at all between creatures of different species! On the other hand, my son's noble high-souled character prevented me from conceiving the remotest suspicion of any ill results of another nature to the intimacy. It happened, moreover, that I had an unusually-protracted attack of the horrible melancholy which precedes and follows the paroxysms of my disorder, and I was too exquisitely consoled and revived by the constant company and cheerful devotion of these two richly-endowed creatures, whose association seemed to sustain both equally in their task, to dream for a moment of severing it. I am even still unwilling to think that Emily could at this period have formed the

insidious design she has since so dangerously carried out. She has assured me, with every mark of sincere and passionate emotion, that she never apprehended in the least the fatality which has occurred, until a much later period. She did not believe herself capable, she declared, of inspiring sentiments of the kind in any one! She even, in the confusion of her final avowal, dropped something to the effect that, on an occasion when she had herself endeavoured to inspire affection in a person of the opposite sex, she had failed! Glengariff has not even the honour to be the first love—the first matrimonial prize, I should say—of this most wonderfully artful and designing English girl!

“I speak of her avowal; for imagine, if you can—and I remember well you had not too good an opinion of women in general, my dear friend, nor have cause—the exceeding artifice and subtlety of the plan hit upon to bring the whole contrivance to bear; in the least offensive and startling manner, it was doubtless thought, as respected myself.

“How, indeed, she could have wrought Glengariff up to such an excess of infatuation as to enter into her scheme, and to hope for any success with me, I cannot dream. The women of these times must surely be in possession of the philtres and charms of which we hear in ancient stories, or deal in the witchcrafts of the Middle Ages! And yet, in a creature so seemingly frank, disinterested, and generous-hearted as this young girl has always impressed herself to be on all who beheld her, how could I conjecture a faculty of dissimulation and intrigue so perfected? Even Glengariff’s expression of a wish and intention—so sudden and unaccountable, one might say, in a young man of his years, just beginning to taste the pleasures of society and of the great world to which his birth and wealth gave him the readiest access—to retire from the army and become a resident landlord on his estates, had not awakened my suspicions. The project certainly somewhat annoyed and disquieted me, for a solitary and inactive life was never suited to the genius of our family; and I cannot but think that my own too complete withdrawal from society, on the

sudden death of my beloved husband, contributed more than any thing else to my subjection to the dreadful malady I inherit with the grandeur of my descent. But I was too completely besotted by my affection for an only son—too blinded by the credulity, perhaps, of self-love—to perceive the young man's real motives and design. Nay, I must admit, with such extraordinary skill and artifice had the whole project been concerted, that even when the momentous fact was brought directly to my cognisance, my trust in Emily continued for a while quite unabated and assured.

“It was she herself then, in short, who revealed to me, with every apparent sign of grief and disapprobation on her own part, that Lord Glengariff had made the avowal to her of a passion which he declared would prove his destruction unless as warmly responded to!—A passion which, he announced, nothing could ever change or diminish, and which a natural eloquence and poetical fervour of expression he is gifted with would certainly have rendered irresistible in the ears of any woman, even if greatly prepossessed in favour of another. But what other living man would not my Glengariff eclipse, in any rational comparison? Who can vie with him in the endowments of personal beauty, polish of manners, cultivation of intellect, all that would stamp the lowliest-born of mankind a nobleman of nature's costliest workmanship? But is he not rich, high-born, loftily titled too?—descended from that great O'Donoghue of the Lakes whose renown has passed into the regions of mythic and fabulous grandeur, in the traditions of the peasantry of the South of Ireland?

“And yet Miss Emily Maughan—the beggared daughter of a bankrupt trader, who had perished by his own hand—at best a nondescript between a servant and a humble companion in a great household—would have persuaded me—did persuade me—that she had turned a deaf ear to all the passion and entreaties of a wooing prince, as it were, and that she desired nothing more than to remove herself from the necessity of repeating her refusal! She did not, indeed, venture to try my credulity so far as to

allege, at that time, any thing so wonderfully out of all understanding and calculation as an offer of an honourable union on the part of a chief of Glengariff declined by a destitute adventuress. That was another part of the programme, and to be carried out by an agency to which some possible credit, it was thought, might be attached. For was it to be conceived that my son would invent, against himself, so humiliating a statement, but so artfully contrived to do honour to the pretended good faith and fidelity of the treacherous girl, who doubtless contrived and conducted the whole intrigue?

“Under these appearances, of course I consented at once, though, I own it, with the deepest regret,—while my hallucination continued,—to Miss Maughan’s expressed earnest desire to leave Glengariff, and remove to a distance; at least until such time as that my son might be led to perceive the vanity of his hopes, and return to his proper brilliant position in the world, and enjoyment of the advantages at his disposal. We even, as I thought, concerted a plan in perfect confidence and intelligence with each other, by which Emily was to remain, as it were, within call of a speedy return, the moment we had reason to believe a return compatible with the kind of safety we desired to secure. She herself, indeed, skilfully hinted at family and personal reasons which rendered her unwilling to return to England; so, in conclusion, we agreed to advertise for another situation for her in Ireland, for a season; and as we set about the insidious project at once, I had reason to take comfort in the prospect of the approaching separation, and to consent to the artful girl’s suggestion that I should consult my health and peace of mind by entering into no kind of explanation with my son on the subject. Of course I took care—good heavens! and even in compliance with her own inexpressibly deceptive request—to obviate the dangers of any further private intercourse by my own constant presence and vigilance in their company. But no doubt they found opportunities, which eluded both, to arrange and carry forward their plans.

“Success seemingly awaited our first supposed harmonious action. The advertisement was answered by a citizen

of Belfast, who required a governess in his family—at a very moderate salary certainly, considering the qualities and accomplishments which he seemed to consider essential to the position. But our plan was only for a temporary exigency. Belfast seemed admirably remote for the main object I believed her as well as myself to have in view. And also Miss Maughan either recognised, or affected to recognise, in the applicant the father of a schoolfellow of her own, whom she remembered as a very handsome and good-natured girl, who would probably contribute to make her new home less strange and desolate. From very proper motives, however, as I thought at the time, she laid no claims to this early association, but forwarded the amplest testimonials to her merits I could devise, without comment. The reply was such as we had a right to expect; and Sir Orange Graham even expressed himself quite proud and gratified at the prospect of an instructress for his younger children who had been thought worthy to conduct the education of a daughter of the noble house of Glengariff.

“To complete the whole mockery, Miss Maughan affected to take advantage of an absence, which my son was certainly induced on her private instructions to feign, on a shooting excursion in the mountains, to take her departure from Glengariff. The manœuvre was effected with what I consider great dexterity. We had a pretended discussion before the domestics concerning some point of difference in my notions and hers regarding Gwendoline’s course of instruction. I dismissed her seemingly in a passion, and she left the house, seemingly in a pet, without leaving any guidance or information as to whither she intended to proceed—had she kept our arrangement—after being driven in one of the family jaunting-cars to the nearest coach-town. She left—I am ashamed to say it now—under my warmest tears and benedictions, parting with as fond embraces and assurances of mutual regret and tenderness as if we had been indeed mother and daughter, separated by the most disastrous circumstances. As for Gwendoline, the poor child is not yet consoled for that specious loss.

“The whole craft and hypocrisy of the plan was, however, unveiled on my son’s return, which was also unexpectedly early and abrupt. But what foundation could there be for his allegation, that he had some kind of mysterious and perhaps supernatural intimation of misfortune threatening him, though he inherits the blood of the great O’Donoghue, since what had befallen had rather been to his preservation? Perhaps even, if I had questioned him, he would not have scrupled to pretend that he had seen his ancestor rise from the bosom of Glengariff lake, in the golden armour, on the snow-white water-steed, with its finny fore-paws! There is no profanation of which I do not fancy Glengariff capable, under the inspirations of that wicked girl! But as it was, he no sooner learned from me that Miss Maughan had left the castle, in consequence of a dispute with me, and that I did not intend her to return, than he passed at once into an access of rage and despair that proved but too well that he inherits the stormy spirit of his ancestry—perhaps their dark and inscrutable malady! Or else, unaccustomed to deceit, he overacted his part, and taking, as he imagined, advantage of the awe and alarm into which I was thrown by the outbreak, burst out with the insane assertion that he had actually *proposed marriage* to Miss Maughan, and that she had declined the offer, but that he was determined to win so priceless a blessing at the cost of every other, if need were. Yes, that—that he would find her out, and bring her back as its mistress to Glengariff Castle, if I had hidden her in the centre of the earth! My son had even the barbarity to thunder forth that the illustrious unmixed ancestry of which I reminded him had entailed the most fearful of diseases on their descendants, probably from that very circumstance, and that he was resolved to transmit his name by fresher streams to posterity, or suffer it to perish for ever from the land.

“It began to dawn upon me then that in reality I was made the sport and plaything of a craftily-devised intrigue, and that my unhappy son, made the victim of the perfidious artifices of a strange woman, took this shallow means to break his insane projects to me. But he speedily found

that I also inherit the heroic fervour of my race, and that—. We had an awful scene—a fearful quarrel. But I did not surely curse my child, my only son? No; but I pronounced upon the alliance with which he threatened me a parent's malediction. What followed I scarcely know. Glengariff fled from my presence; but all would have been well, only that—”

Here this lengthy epistle seemed to have come to an abrupt pause, for what followed was written in a fainter kind of ink, in a shaky and uncertain hand, differing considerably from the previous caligraphy :

“I have had, I believe, one of the most fearful attacks I have ever yet survived,—of several weeks' duration. I am very weak, ill, incapable of any resolution or movement. But it was perfectly plain it was all a delusion and deceit. They are doubtless together somewhere—perhaps married—perhaps not. My son may have proved a villain to her, poor girl!—He has proved one to his own mother! What am I saying?—I know not. But oh, Behringbright, Behringbright! if ever my poor late husband was dear to you—if he saved your life when you were all but swallowed in the crevasse on the Alps when you visited them together—cross the sea at once, at once, dear friend! and come, come, come, and save us all!”

There was a slight postscript added :

“The business person whose family she pretended to enter is called Sir Orange Graham, a trader in Belfast.”

CHAPTER XIV.

FASCINATION.

It will appear from the foregoing document that Mr. Behringbright's business in Ireland might very possibly relate to matters of as much importance, considered under some points of view, as any shipload of linens ever manufactured at Belfast. The happiness of the lives of two young persons—the honour, perhaps, of a woman, seemed concerned in it. To be sure, these things are not to be

reckoned as much in comparison with aught that relates to the great purpose of the modern Britisher's creation—moneymaking. But by some strange perversion in the order of nature which is sometimes witnessed in the material world—as when, from a sharp crab stock, the sweet and juicy-flavoured Adam-and-Eve apple is produced—the rich Mr. Behringbright himself postponed a variety of important business enterprises to attend to one involving only such trifling considerations as those alluded to above.

And yet it would be no easy task to describe exactly with what particular feelings and emotions Mr. Behringbright was animated in the resolution he took to cross the Irish Sea in person, and ascertain the real condition of affairs to his own SATISFACTION. Using the common phrase, that is; for somehow or other the resolved voyager himself was conscious of a strange and unaccountable irk of uncomfortable experience awakened in his breast, and threatening to grow in painfulness and irritation, like the first start of the gout in some unwonted member of the human frame.

It is rather singular—if every thing else relating to the genus *homo* were not so strange—if, when one's uncle's King in Denmark, and married to one's mother, any thing else could appear surprising! But what we have, or can easily win into possession, seems by no means to excite the same degree of interest and activity towards that result as desirable things placed under exactly contrary conditions. Would Juliet, I wonder, have persisted in doting on Romeo—doting on the young gentleman to the extent of dying for him—if the quarrel of the Capulets and Montagues had not rendered it virtually impossible that he and she should ever be comfortably married and settled in Verona? There *are* cases too on record, of men unable to survive their wives, widows their dear defuncts; but they are rare, and not within the limits of every body's experience. But now this particular mood of mysterious humanity, by which we no sooner see an object, previously slighted and undervalued because in our grasp, suddenly removed by any accident of fate and circumstance into the regions of the unattainable, than it becomes of extra-

ordinary worth and anxiety of pursuit, is a mood not at all so rare and exceptional as for the credit of human consistency and propriety it should be. And this might be a little Mr. Behringbright's condition at the moment of his departure for Ireland. Emily Maughan—devotedly, uncomplainingly, perhaps almost unconsciously to herself, worshipping him; offering incense in the temple she had raised to him in her boundless gratitude and admiration—was, on the whole, rather an annoyance,—an unpleasing claim on attention. But Emily Maughan, deserting the temple she had raised, serving no longer at the altar, incensing the idol's shrine no more; on the contrary, herself elevated to the goddess rank, and receiving the homage of so glorified a worshipper as the young chieftain of Glengariff, possessed of all the like advantages, and so many more of those he imagined himself chiefly to lack;—all this presented a disturbing and exceedingly unwelcome and uneasy series of reflections and convictions to the mind of George Cocker Behringbright.

He managed, however, to persuade himself that the only real interest he took in the lamentable affair was prompted by a sense of duty towards the heir and family of a dear dead friend; and also—although she had proved herself not different from the rest of her sex—in fact, an artful, contriving, ambitious minx, introduced by him (unfortunately) into a noble house, to become the bane of it!—a feeling that he ought not to allow a young creature whom he had in some degree taken under his protection to be altogether abandoned of friends and good counsel! Nay, Mr. Behringbright thought it pretty certain that Emily must already be in need of both; for, on the one hand, he placed no belief whatever in Lord Glengariff having really been cajoled into so total an oblivion of what was due to his own high rank and position in the world as to offer *marriage* to an unprotected governess girl of eighteen or nineteen; and on the other, the misogynist merchant concluded that her own cupidity and blind pursuit of aggrandisement would mislead her into any snare of the kind that might be spread before her feet.

But whatever were his motives or intentions, there he stood, Mr. Behringbright, of the firm of Behringbright Brothers, of London and half the world besides, on the deck of the General Steam Navigation Company's royal steamer Prince Alfred, as she lay panting and puffing and palpitating up her "motive power" off Fleetwood Pier, in Lancashire, at half-past seven, on a serene and beautifully-moonlit summer evening.

Is there not something real, after all, in the theory of presentiments? There was nothing otherwise to account for the feeling of profound dejection which weighed upon Mr. Behringbright's spirits on this occasion. On the contrary, the noble expanse of Morecambe Bay shone all over, in the bright and full-orbed moon, like a sea of sparkling emerald. Very tranquil too; the most uneasy of land stomachs had as yet no justification for a qualm. But still a vague sense of approaching disaster overhung him, like an unseen cloud in the blue expanse above. In vain he endeavoured to smoke off the sensation; it resisted the most soothing efforts of the Cuban weed; and Mr. Behringbright, who had long had the clean-washed deck of the steamer almost to himself, felt relieved as if from a horror of desolation when the tolling of the pier-bell produced the customary hurry-scurrying of passengers down to the place of embarkation.

He strolled to the gangway to divert his mind by witnessing this; but, finding the confusion and bustle in the immediate neighbourhood of action rather more than he liked, mounted one of the paddle-boxes, and surveyed the scene from that calmer elevation.

Thus he stood, leaning against some rope-ladder stiff with tar, his thick coarse plaid fluttering in the sea-breeze, and his cigar burning away at a fierce rate in the passionate puffings of that uninvited sharer, lost in a still heavily overhanging reverie—when on a sudden Mr. Behringbright started!—Started to find his own unmeaningly fixed gaze encountering a glance so full of brilliant life and electricity of expression that it in a manner galvanised him into emotion and curiosity before it was at all plain to his own consciousness what had happened to him. He then re-

membered that this singular glance had emanated from under a black-velvet hat and feather and bugled veil, which the wind had blown aside ; surmounting a figure fluttering in its travelling habiliments, in like picturesque disorder to his own plaid, and led on over the heaving plank between the steamer and the pier by a tall, gaunt-looking gentleman in a long black, undertaker-like cloak.

What was it that struck Mr. Behringbright at once with a conviction that these dazzling orbs were no strangers in his own ? And he was strengthened in the notion by a vague and yet positive idea, communicated in the same shock of encounter, that those eyes expressed on their part also a singular disorder of recognition, which apparently induced the owner to clutch down her floating networks and cover herself, as it were, in concealment, in their shades !

Mr. Behringbright plunged into a gulf of recollections as this idea struck deeper and deeper into his mind. Where had he seen this face ? Where encountered ere-while that strangely fascinating glance ? In a moment his memory wandered back through half a thousand balls, assemblies, presentations at court, operas, theatres, continental wanderings ; a hundred and more submerged beauties shone up again from the sharky deeps of his unnumbered matrimonial temptations—were knocked on the head, and sent down again in the abyss, ere Mr. Behringbright plumped with a curious chill at the heart, as if he had himself been suddenly drawn literally into the cold wave—on the remembrance that those brilliant orbs had first attracted his attention on the famous night of the Théâtre St. Jacques de Londres !

We can do a great deal of thinking in a little time ; and probably Mr. Behringbright was not more than a single minute in passing through all this chaos of reminiscences ere he alighted on the conviction. But he was a good deal longer in endeavouring to fathom to his own satisfaction whether in reality there was recognition in the lady's glance. If so, what became of all his pretty imaginative theories regarding the total unconcern of the

beautiful young creature herself in the plans of that excrable Frenchwoman?

It astonished Mr. Behringbright, when he afterwards came to consider of it, why the suspicion thus flashed into his cogitations annoyed him so very much!

What did it matter, any way? But was it so?—To satisfy the doubt, this wise merchant, who traded with half the globe, and traded mostly to advantage, thought he would present himself again to the young lady's notice; and if she did recognise him, cut *her* dead, at once, as just such another specimen of the dissembling sex as any man of sense and experience would expect to find any and all!

Accordingly Mr. Behringbright wrapped his plaid about him so as to restrain its playfuller gambols; and as the vessel was now in movement, began to descend as cautiously as he might from the paddle-box.

On the whole, certainly, his figure might not have appeared to much advantage in this transit. He was a thorough landsman, and felt giddy and perturbed in the action, and he clutched rather airily at imaginary ropes and other assistances in descending the steep semicircular incline within which the swimming giant's steam-arms foamed and tore at the waves to assist his progress with his load. Still it was very rude of the two persons who did it, we must say, who burst into a tremendous guffaw, at witnessing the operation; themselves the while warmly and comfortably ensconced on a pile of luggage round the funnel. Moreover, to complete the fun, Mr. Behringbright stumbled when he came within a rung or two of the deck, and endeavouring to prevent himself from going backward overboard, arrived on it with a violence that sent him the reverse way, full shock, on one of the laughers. The two men met indeed in a manner not untypical of their future antagonism.

"*Sacré nom!* what do mean, sir? You have almost thundered my heart out of my ribs with your unparalleled awkwardness!" exclaimed the person struck against, in an exceedingly irate, and, in truth, insolent and provocative manner. Not every one, however, quarrelled with Mr. Behringbright who wished to do so; he had not much of

the phosphoric blood of Normandy in his veins, and very slowly gave out fire. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said; "it was an accident. I am hurt myself; I trust a good deal more than you are."

"Don't take his apology, *Camille*!—It's only patient *camels* that do that! Stand on the point of honour, and have satisfaction out of his hide!" said the unpeacemaking companion, in a strong nasal tone, evidently enjoying the diversion, and endeavouring to egg-on his companion to some still more amusingly formidable a demonstration.

And the merchant's meekness seemed indeed to put it into the hero of the *Sacré Nom*'s head to enlarge in the bullying style he had adopted from the first.

"It is no accident, sir!" he exclaimed, as ferociously as a somewhat effeminately-toned voice admitted. "You saw that we were smiling at the awkwardness of the evolutions you executed in descending to the deck, and have purposely precipitated your disastrous weight upon me!"

"Well, sir, if you think so, I cannot help it,—have it your own way. I can only repeat, in mine, that I am, at all events, very sorry for the severe inconvenience I have given myself in the fall."

"There it is,—British domineering and insolence all over the world!—Don't stand it, Frenchy!—Remember Waterloo, and pitch into him!" said the ill-natured fellow who was enjoying and creating this sport, as he doubtless considered it; bursting into a huge coarse laugh, which showed all his long, thin, panther-like teeth halfway down the throat.

"I demand satisfaction for the affront, sir," exclaimed the champion addressed as "Frenchy," but by no means in so fierce and formidable a tone as should have been, had his heart been quite in the same place with the *tall* words he used.

"Are you two madmen, gentlemen?" exclaimed Mr. Behringbright, really astonished, and eyeing the opposite parties in the altercation with now some sternness of observation.

"I can answer for one, *Mr. Behringbright*!" returned he of the nasal tones, in a strong, defiant accent, although

he had pronounced that name which was the very synonym of riches. "I think you know it a little to your cost, that *I* am pretty tarnation comfortably watertight in my brain compartments; for you can't have forgot the action you brought against us—and *lost*—concerning those rotten buffalo skins, as you pretended they was, and came as fresh off the creatures' backs as if they had been stripped alive!"

"Oh, Mr. Flamingo Brown!" said Mr. Behringbright, no longer dissembling the marked disgust in his tones.

"And I am not ashamed of the name, sir, in either hemisphere!" was the extensive retort.

"Well! if the name is not ashamed of you, Mr. Brown, I do not see why *you* should be," was the mild rejoinder.

"That is an ample retraction, sir, as regards your humble servant, as you call one another over here for pride's sake. But if I was this young gentleman, I would have another and a bigger out of you, or know the reason why," resumed this mischief-maker, backing fast enough out of the quarrel on his own account, but adding in an insidious whisper to his companion, "*Go in at him!* Don't you see he'll take any amount of bullying?—And there's a chance for you to cut a tremendously fine figure before that pretty girl you were boasting of, with as little risk as possible to your own leather!"

"But . . . but . . . I do not perceive . . . I am not so much hurt! Monsieur has asked my forgiveness in all the forms!" stammered the younger of the two injured voyagers—as he very plainly appeared to be.

"Ah! it's such sneaking fellows as you that let the Britishers put the heel of their iron calkers on the smashed face of all creation!" bitterly ejaculated Mr. Flamingo Brown, quite willing to get up a mortal quarrel between two strangers, merely because he had himself been detected and brought to justice—or attempted to be brought to justice—for cheating in a cargo of Californian hides.

Mr. Behringbright himself had no manner of wish to press the quarrel farther; and bearing what his *bonâ fide* antagonist had said, even courteously raised his wide-awake and proceeded on his original intention; haunted, however,

for some distance by the extremely diverse phantom resemblances of a very handsome Parisian *élégant*, though but evidently of feeble and coxcombical character, and that other tall, bullying, "half-man, half-alligator" Yankee, who had laboured with so much zeal to promote the accidental ill-will aroused between them.

Nor did the latter cease from the unchristian task even when Mr. Behringbright had removed his obnoxious presence.

"Didn't you say, *Monskewer Leteller*," he remarked, as they watched the receding figure, "that you hated riches, and rich men, and all the overbearing, aristocratic feeling of this rotten old country, in all its roots and branches?—Well, yonder man is the richest merchant in all London city; and that's to say, I suppose, according to the Britishers, in all the world!"

"Ah! *who* is he? *what* is he?"

"Behringbright Brothers!"

"Ah! it is a name whose celebrity influences all the exchanges of Europe. But do not mistake me, Mr. Brown, so infinitely as to imagine that I dislike riches in themselves. On the contrary, Tantalus himself never thirsted for the waters rushing close below his lips so ardently as I desire *for myself* riches! It is to see them in the possession of others only that I feel so profound a repugnance; and to know what humiliations, what restraints, what perversities of fate, what dishonourable and unhappy conduct, I may even say, an unfortunate must submit to, who, with all the desire to enjoy the world like a prince, is condemned to the miserable stipend and existence of a—what do you call him?—a *commercial traveller*!"

"Pho! I was one myself for years till I made that reg'lar sunburst of a speculation in a run of black cattle from Cuba, in Walker's time, under the pretence of filibustering for liberty, and all that thar," replied Mr. Flamingo Brown, patronisingly. "But I suppose what you mean to say is, that you are crossed in your love-affairs—perhaps with that splendacious gal you observed you must not notice for your life, because she was with some rich sort of an old fellow, her father, just now? And like most

other green critturs in the dawn of creation, as one may call being in love (I was once, I think, almost in love myself), fancy the end of the world is come, because they won't pack her up in a gold wicker-basket, and make you a present of her with their unanimous compliments. That's what about ails you, isn't it?

"What would be the use of a man's obtaining to himself the daughter of Croesus, if the father vowed upon the instant to cast her off and disinherit her for ever?" said the young Frenchman, with a deeply sentimental sigh.

"Not much, of course, in the dollar department; but once upon a time young people did not look altogether to that consideration,—or hardly at all, I've heard say in the songs,—but would bolt together the first opportunity, and take their chance for making it all right with the old dad or starving. Put it on a toss-up—heads, I win! tails, you lose!"

"Ah, yes, but *she* also!—she also is animated with the conviction of the necessity of wealth, and utterly refuses any such *coup* of extrication," exclaimed the Frenchman precipitately, and apparently thrown off his guard.

"*Who* does? *what* does?" said the Yankee, with evidently, on his part, a very lively-startled curiosity.

"I am sworn to an eternal, an impenetrable secrecy," said Monsieur Le Tellier, with an air of inexorable fixity of purpose.

The Yankee laughed. "Then all I can say is, that I wish you your health to wear it; and if the object of your affections is such *another* as you describe, you may depend upon it she will play you a jade's trick some day, and kick you and your milk-pail over both in the mire!"

"No!" returned the Frenchman, with a singularly vain-glorious and self-confident look, that for a moment even subdued the incredulous Yankee into acquiescence; "I have *secured her mine*, in links which it is impossible that any woman, endowed with the common feelings—the sentiments of a woman—can ever think to break!"

But Mr. Flamingo Brown speedily rallied.

"Oh, bosh!" he said; "that's the way all you Frenchmen gabble, boasting of kisses in the dark when no one

can see whether you are lying or not. Links, indeed! There are no links now that bind people to any thing unless they are made of gold. I'll wager the sun, moon, and stars, now in one truck—for example, that if that hulking mammon-god, that came bang against us like an exploding shell a few moments ago, were to offer his hand and money to this boasted fine young lady Juliet of yours, she'd jump at him without a skipping-rope, and leave you to hang or drown yourself, as you thought proper, with no more compunction than a fishmonger boils a crab!"

"Ha! ha!—we shall see."

"So we shall, perhaps; for, by Jove! that's the grisly bear's with the golden claws fifth circulation round where the young lady *with the eyes* is sitting—with her 'pa, I suppose?"

"Aha! let him circulate; it is all in vain. What! to parade a person that reminds one only of a Diogenes without his tub, before Miss Madeleine Graham! Aha! It is vain, had he a mountain of gold to coin into sovereigns and napoleons, and would fling them all at her feet."

"*Miss Madeleine Graham!*—Commend me to a Frenchman for keeping a lady's name under the rose," said the Yankee, bursting into a hoarse peal of laughter. "Well, be it all as you say, I still strongly recommend you not to put her up to the fact that we have such a *claim* on board as we have, or you'll see she'll be for putting in her spade in the diggings too, like any other sensible woman who knows what money's worth means! But I grant you, if nobody lets her into the secret, she is not likely to suspect she sees a two-million man in such a steerage-passenger-looking fellow as that!"

"Ah! if by any chance I shall spy my opportunity to address her, it is not concerning any other man that I shall dissipate the time in amusing her," said the young Frenchman, with a smile full of the most inexpressible vanity. "But, alas!" he added, relapsing into a gloomy sentimental mood, which he seemed to think became him—"but, alas! she has passed upon me the most rigorous sentence,—not to venture even on a humble recognition of her, on any public occasion, on pain of forfeiting all

the happiness of our private meetings and assurances of mutual devotion on which we both repose!"

"Well, good-night, then; sleep well on your air-matress!—But now let's find out the bar, and liquor like men of this world."

CHAPTER XV

CALIPH HAROUN ALRASCHID.

MEANWHILE Mr. Behringbright had strolled in the usually careless and unobservant manner of a man who wants to observe, towards what he now discerned to be a family group of three persons; of whom the object of his attraction was one. Father and mother and daughter appeared to form it. The first of these was a severe, puritanical-looking man, with a carking, anxious, business expression, rather deepened in gloom and austerity than softened by the shadows of time. The second, on the contrary, was a short, stout, strunty little woman, much younger than her consort; with a face that must at some time have been particularly handsome, and was still remarkable for the showy colours of the complexion, and a lively, saucy, have-at-you expression, that marked the flow of the *rale* Milesian blood in her veins. And now, considering these varied qualities of sire and dam, it seemed sufficiently explicable how Madeleine Graham's figure had come to combine such an unusual mixture of charm and attraction—of graceful, slender, and yet voluptuous rounding in the stature—so bright and vivaciously careless an expression, with an internal power of calculation and self-control that would have qualified her, on the greater theatres of ambition, to have played the part of a Clytemnestra or Lady Macbeth, as unshrinkingly as either of those admired impersonations of colossal and magnificent crime.

So Mr. Behringbright thought as he slowly made his way, pausing at various obstructions which he chiefly found for himself, towards the company, keeping the figure always, nevertheless, in his eye. At least, so far as re-

lated to physical considerations. He was very far indeed from giving Madeleine Graham credit for the capacities of exalted mischief she possessed, and perhaps could scarcely have conceived them, not having himself a particle of the *perfervidum ingenium*, either of Scot or Hibernian, in his own calm Dutch and Saxon compounded nature. He also thought she was very much improved from her exceedingly girlish appearance when he had first seen her, under circumstances so inauspicious to favourable consideration, but in which she had stamped her image so ineffaceably on his memory. There was even a something of passionate sentiment and physical exaltation in her general expression, which, while it puzzled conjecture, had a singular species of fascination and attraction for Mr. Behringbright, who, without knowing it, had been all his life sighing for sentiment and enthusiasm in his relations with the fair sex. Alas! the fairest gave him no opportunity to enjoy those exquisite alternations of hope and fear which make up the lover's irrational delight, and keep alive the kindled fire! Every body was so ready to have him; he had only to glance to see difficulties vanish, like darkness before the flash of a lamp!

It was different in this case; and Mr. Behringbright was forced to acknowledge to himself the injustice of his previous inklings of suspicion when, passing for the second time pretty close to Madeleine, as she stood watching the foamy flooding of the sea from the paddle-wheels below, apparently in reverie, he caught again the glance of those wonderful eyes, and felt, in their utterly unmoved and unchanged expression, how completely he must be a stranger in them! Perhaps if he had been aware what a strong and even startling meaning there was in his own, he would have seen an excess in the unconcern exhibited, somewhat injurious to the impression intended to be produced. But of course he could not, and was justified in arriving at the conclusion he anchored in, after that momentary, soft, uninterested observation had fallen upon him, and had then reverted, with an increased unconsciousness of indifference, to the tumbling waves below the paddle-wheel.

Yet somehow Mr. Behringbright—after some brief satisfaction in the circumstance—grew uncomfortable at it. It annoyed him to think that he must continue a stranger in such very fine eyes; though it was all very well to find that he could not possibly, in this instance, be indebted to any adventitious circumstance to make advances towards an acquaintance, on his part, too readily acceptable. Garbed as he was, he knew that he would certainly be taken for any thing but a millionaire. A cattle-dealer looked more probable, saving that there certainly was an air of superior education and mental power in his expression that were not likely to be devoted to that kind of occupation.

And now, strange to say, Mr. Behringbright, the most unimaginative of men, formed a little project in his own mind, such as might have entered the head of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, but not, one would have thought, the sober brains of a merchant of London. He determined, at least for once, to enjoy the luxury of believing himself appreciated on the score of his own merits alone, and to contrive to introduce himself to the young lady's notice (he was determined on *that*) in a manner which would secure him against his wonted mortification of finding himself honoured rather as a money-bag than as a man! Though why, or with what intent he desired to bring about this result, Mr. Behringbright had really himself no very clearly-formed notion.

Chance offered him some assistance in his project. The steamer had now got into the open fling of the sea, and rose and dipped rather heavily against the run of the water, driven by a contrary wind. One of these buffets set every thing loose and rattling about them, and among the rest a block, by some accident left unfastened, swung heavily down from the rigging, almost on Madeleine's head, if Mr. Behringbright, happening to pass on his fifth majestic, Ghost-in-Hamlet sort of pacing the deck, had not perceived the danger, and with great presence of mind and activity suddenly seized the young lady by her burnous, and drawn her, with some saving violence, out of the orbit of the attack.

Madeleine and her whole party discerned instantaneously that she had escaped the danger of a very severe blow. Her mother gave a scream, and her father himself, awaking from an apathy of inattention which seemed habitual to him, uttered an exclamation.

"God be praised!" he exclaimed, when he perceived what had occurred, with a Puritan twang in the pious expression, which might have become a Cromwellian Roundhead. "My daughter had a narrow escape there, sir," he continued in a more natural, nineteenth-century tone. "Thank the gentleman, Madeleine, for your whole skull! I am sure you ought."

"And I am sure I do, papa, from the bottom of my heart," replied the young lady, with a sweet and melting earnestness of intonation on the words that seemed to flow like a stream of music into Mr. Behringbright's corporeal frame. And yet—and yet—he shuddered! Was it with the reaction of the rapid and decided effort he had made, which was only usual with him in matters of business? Or was it some chill of the now darkening night-wind? Or was it that in all those harmonious accents mingled something of the dread and nameless *horror of fascination*, still not to be resisted, of the treacherous siren daughters of the wave? Certain it is Mr. Behringbright shuddered; while he felt that there was something indescribably winning and attractive in these few simple words that never before had he discerned in any accents feminine.

"I'm sure we're all very much obliged to you, sir. Madeleine's face might almost have been knocked to pieces by a thing like that hitting against it, and that would have been a rum joke!" said the mother heartily, in by no means such soft and dulcet tones as her daughter's, nor in language so refined, but possibly with a good deal more sincerity and honesty in those she used. "Give him your card, Sir Orange; I am sure we shall be very glad to see you at home, sir, if you're a stranger in Belfast, as I see by your appearance you are. We are not above any sort of Christian fellowship in the world, pro-

vided you are not a Roman, sir. Particularly when one feels an obligation."

Mr. Behringbright, rather amused at this display of general Christian charity, exonerated himself from the supposition. Nor was he at the moment struck by the name he heard thus pronounced, until Sir Orange Graham produced a card inscribed with it; to say truth, rather slowly and reluctantly, though he seemed to yield a singular degree of submission to his consort's decrees; singular in a man who was so apparently otherwise of an austere and unbending personal character.

"Sir Orange Graham!" then exclaimed rather than read Mr. Behringbright, struck by the recollection that this was the designation of the Belfast "trader," or manufacturer, with whom Emily Maughan was declared to have *feigned* a resolution of accepting a domicile as governess.

"Yes, sir: what occasions your surprise at *that* being my name? The glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the man who redeemed these islands from the yoke of the Pope and the Inquisition——"

"Hold your bother, now, to a stranger, Sir Orange! can't you? What's the use of talking such old-fashioned stuff as that to an Englishman who has forgotten all about racks and thumb-screws and all that nonsense these hundreds of years?" interposed Lady Graham; with very proper impatience and disdain, as it seemed to Mr. Behringbright himself, who hated nothing so much as any species of religious rancour and animosity.

"But I am not surprised at any thing in your name, Sir Orange, except at the accidental coincidence that—that I believe there is some young relation of mine!—resident as a governess in your family," said Mr. Behringbright, not knowing how else to put it so as not to trip up his own excellent notion of playing the *Caliph in disguise*. Almost certain, besides, that he should hear tidings of the fugitive of Glengariff's non-appearance, where she had intended to go, and confirmation of her being the usual sort of creature his experience figured in all the varieties of womankind.

"*Is* she a relative of yours? *Is* Miss Emily Maughan? —Then I am sure, sir, you ought to be proud of her; for a sweeter and better-behaved, though rather down-spirited young creature, I never saw in my life! and it quite took away all the anxieties I felt on my spirits at the idea of leaving my little darlings without their mother, on this treat of Sir Orange's about the new Grand Trunk Line before Parliament, who took us with him to London, in the expenses, as he had a right, for the corporation," said Lady Graham; not expressing herself too clearly perhaps, and laughing as if she had never had an anxiety in her life.

"Miss Maughan's a very good girl, I must say certainly, and quite the lady in all she says and does, and is an acquisition to any Christian family; and so I've found her in mine," said Sir Orange pompously, adding, "She came recommended to us from the Countess of Glengariff, of Glengariff Castle; but that is a true-blue Protestant-ascendency family, and has been for centuries, though it resides in the south; or I should never have admitted her into mine, you may be sure, sir!"

"Of course, Sir Orange. She really did come to your family, then, from Glengariff Castle? And is still resident in it?" said Mr. Behringbright, rather puzzled.

"Certainly. I had a letter from her only yesterday, saying that little Mary Anna's earache is quite gone and every thing comfortable . . . as usual," remarked the mother of the family. "Why, she's scarcely been a month among us, and they're all as fond of her as if she had been six years."

"Well, mamma, you know she was not quite a stranger; she was my schoolfellow in London, I soon found out," said Madeleine, in a rather altered tone, but probably deeming candour and amiable reminiscence of the kind, under the circumstances, best.

"Are you Miss Maughan's *uncle*, sir?" inquired Sir Orange now, with rather unexpected hardness and abruptness.

Mr. Behringbright, besides being thrown out of his calculations in general, felt this question jarred on some fine nerve. He winced. He certainly did not look *very*

young ; he was no beardless Damian, though he shaved pretty close. Yet, on the whole, did he look like *an uncle*? Like Miss Emily Maughan's—UNCLE? It was towards Madeleine Graham, hardly knowing that he did so himself, that he looked for information on this point.

"You mean her *cousin*, papa, surely, like that other young gentleman who looked like a military man, that came soon after Emily did—and insisted on seeing her—as such!" murmured the deep melodious undertones of Madeleine Graham at this conjecture.

This was rather strong! but, O ye gods and little fishes! it went down as smooth as honey; even that nobbled throat, so practised at rejection, swallowed it, administered from the peculiar papboat!

"Do you mean to say that Lord Glengariff—I mean, a Serjeant-Major in his Lordship's troop—Miss Maughan's cousin—our cousin—called upon her?" said Mr. Behringbright.

"Yes; and I believe they had quite a scene," replied Madeleine demurely, yet with a sparkle of secret mischief in her eye. "The young gentleman insisted she had no business to leave Glengariff Castle—although she had been ordered out—without his permission and sanction, being her only relative and friend, he said—for one of our servants heard him making the noise, and what he said—not only in Ireland, but in all the world!"

"He was not right there!" said Mr. Behringbright, with an emotion that did not escape his observant informer—"he was not right there! Miss Maughan has several tried and faithful *friends*, at all events. As for relations, they are not always the staunchest in afflictions. But do you mean to say then, that her *cousin* could not induce her to return to Glengariff Castle?"

"No, sir; she is still with us; not teaching the young idea how to shoot, for they're all girls, of course, she has in training with us. But what I look to is this—I'm truly thankful for it—but what on earth could induce Miss Maughan to leave Glengariff Castle when she might have stayed there? And what had that young man, her cousin, to do with ordering her back, and flying into such a fury

when she refused? I suppose you know all about it, sir?"

"Yes of course!" said Mr. Behringbright, looking and feeling, however, just the contrary of that confident assertion. "It was a quarrel with the great lady there, I believe; who is, to say the least of it, of a capricious temper."

"But what right had the young gentleman to say that he was sure, when his mother knew every thing, she would be reconciled to her return? Who *is* his mother? And what had she to do in the matter?" inquired Madeleine, unable, on this point, to restrain her woman's curiosity.

"His mother's name is the—the same as his own; and I suppose he was vexed to—to see Emily losing such a capital situation," said Mr. Behringbright, greatly disconcerted.

"Is your name too, sir, Maughan? As I have given you my card?" said Sir Orange, rather pointedly.

Mr. Behringbright reflected for an instant—a single instant. In that instant he was lost! He hit upon so ingenious an escape that he involved himself in all the mazy consequences of ingenuity, without having the requisite genius of intrigue to run up and down, with light and dexterous glide, the threads of his own meshes. Perhaps some vague recollection of his recent concussion with the American and Frenchman crossed his mind, and suggested the designation he was pleased to bestow upon himself. "No, Sir Orange," he said, "my name is not Maughan! I wish it were—Maughan is a good deal more stylish than my own; my name is *Brownjohn*—George Brownjohn."

"Humph!" said Sir Orange: adding, after a considerably protracted pause and a profoundly sagacious estimate of the stranger's apparent position and probable antecedents, "*What house do you travel for?*"

Another slight pause.

"Behringbright Brothers," then said Mr. Behringbright.

"A first-rate firm, sir—a first-rate firm: couldn't wish my best friend in a better, in your particular line," said Sir Orange, with marked emphasis.

Madeleine smiled, but not so that any one could discern the smile, looking down over the bulwarks into the rolling sea. Who could ever have guessed her thoughts?

"*He wishes to be loved for himself—does he? Humph!*
HASHISH!"

CHAPTER XVI.

A MARINE CHALLENGE.

THEY may well say *noscitur à sociis*—you are known by the company you keep. Sir Orange Graham had no other reason for concluding our Caliph Haroun was a commercial traveller than the fact that he had observed him in close confabulation with two persons, one of whom he was but too certainly aware belonged to the order of those wandering Tartars of civilisation. But, on the whole, it decidedly served Mr. Behringbright's purpose of remaining incog.; and as he was not a man vain of his personal attributes, it concerned him not greatly that he had been taken to be something so considerably below the rank of a prince.

Meanwhile, the circumstances of his introduction, and the common acquaintanceship of the company with Emily Maughan, smoothed the way to a more easy and friendly communication than would have been likely under other circumstances. There was nothing like pride about Lady Graham in any sense, and she liked few things better than entering into a rattling chatter with any one, stranger or not, who might help to beguile the tediousness of a sea-passage.

"That's what makes one sea-sick, the *tadiousness* of it! Just to see one wave as like another as haystacks, wallowing and tumbling over each other's nasty cold whaley backs, without the least variety in life, and to stand staring at them till one forgets where one's standing at all; and the giddiness comes over one, and a kind of faintness, you know, Mr. Brownjohn, and then it's all up with one!" she said, after complimenting him on the persevering kindness with which he remained in conversation with herself

and her daughter, when Sir Orange himself had long deserted them, under pretence of going down for warmth into the cabin ; in reality, being of a temperament almost as bilious as his name, stealing away, with the modest devotion of a true worshipper, to the remotest stern of the Prince Alfred, there to offer his oblations to Neptune.

Mr. Behringbright had, in fact, laid himself out to please ; and being a man of extensive general information, though he seldom chose to exhibit the fact at all demonstratively, had sufficient means of amusement at his command, in anecdote and allusions to well-known places and persons, likely to interest recent provincial visitors to London. The art with which he meanwhile avoided any thing compromising to his assumed position in society, surprised himself, and perhaps still more one of his listeners. It was in this character that Madeleine Graham chiefly figured on the occasion ; but she listened with so much intelligence—every now and then raised her eyes, so full of beaming apprehension, as it were, admiring appreciation of the good wit and understanding in men and things exhibited by her new acquaintance—that Mr. Behringbright had never felt before so comfortably convinced that he possessed ability in the conversational line, though he had been often very earnestly assured so by mothers and aunts soliciting him to join in their quieter little family parties and reunions. He knew the value of applause directed to the head of a wealthy firm ; but this silently eloquent approbation, conveyed in eye-streams full of sentiment and modesty, was directed—was it not?—to the merits of a “representative man” only, of the commercial order, and must be genuine ! And, indeed, nothing is easier than to find out and admire the wit and good sense of a rich man. But when these qualities display themselves in a shabby dress, the person detecting them is surely entitled to a very considerable share of the honour. In short, Mr. Behringbright was fast making ready to take a *header* into that tempting, heaven-reflecting, fathomless abyss of love, on whose rocky precipices he had hitherto only amused himself with plucking samphire, or other bright weeds, or picking off limpets and starfish—utterly

unconscious at the same time that he was so nigh the edge, and about to take the fatal leap!

The syren meanwhile, wholly unmoved in her own heart, watched the progress of the spell. But in truth, if she ever had possessed such an organ in any but the physical use, it was long since given away to another; but that is doubtful. Sensuality and ambition were the master-springs of Madeleine Graham's character; and, if she had possessed the like imperial opportunities, might, perhaps, have qualified her to play as illustrious a part in the history of her sex as the great Russian Second Catherine herself! But I may be forming too dazzling an estimate of my heroine's capabilities—a fault not exclusively confined to *autobiographers*.

Very few persons in modern society, however, who are aware of the possession of these higher attributes of strenuous and sensuous humanity, care to make an external exhibition of them; and Madeleine Graham was no exception to the rule. She could even blush, I believe, when she thought proper—which is surely one of the most difficult operations of simulation the fair sex can possibly be expected to perform! The statue of Psyche herself, listening to the first breathings of Invisible Love, could not exhibit a more virgin modesty of reception than our poor Madeleine put on in her whole demeanour, while she felt the progress of her triumph in every glance of Mr. Behringbright's honest and pure-minded, but warm and now tenderly-lit—though wontedly dull—gray, internally-thinking eyes.

Yet, perhaps, it is the moral chemist whose analysis errs at this point! Perhaps there was something of real shrinking—of real aversion—to the wickedness that might only be floating dimly then in her mind, in the modest withdrawal—the maidenly coldness and reserve—of Madeleine's manner towards the new, dart-stricken lover! Trained from her earliest childhood in the adoration of wealth, might not still that intervening tremendous interlude of guiltily-frenzied passion have wrought a change in her character and aspirations?—Or was the radiant dream discovered to be already such? Had the delirium of the

senses passed away, and left her more than ever the calm and calculating pursuer of material, tangible interests? Was she a man in this, as well as in undaunted nerve and hardness of resolve? In all but the bewildering softness and insinuation of the feminine nature she could exhibit, when it was necessary to captivate and enthrall?

I prefer myself to think, that although the sudden reappearance of the millionaire, and his scarcely disguised attraction towards her, might revive for awhile the ambitious notion first instilled into her school-girl fancy by Mademoiselle Olympe, Madeleine Graham was yet innocent of any formed and decided criminality of intention as regarded Mr. Behringbright. Moreover, she knew herself to be chained in bonds to another, which it would be scarcely possible to break. The illusion of passion was, it is true, completely over with her, as regarded the lover whom she had suffered to attain such a supremacy over her; and she was aware of the mingled vanity and mercenary rapacity that composed the foundation of Camille Le Tellier's character, and were the main incentives of his actions. He had placed his hopes of rising in the world on the chances of his union with the daughter, and acceptance in the family, of a wealthy trader,—and had her completely in his power. Was it likely he would abandon these advantages? Was he not even at that very moment on board the same vessel with her; against her wishes and the unmistakably expressed dislike and repulses of her father and family? Might he not be playing the espial on her indeed? Perhaps, after all other attempts to solve the mystery, this was the true solution of the extremely retiring and forbearing manner of the young beauty towards her new victim. Madeleine frequently observed—though nobody else did—Camille's handsome porcelain face,—paler than the fine china his complexion emulated—with despicable feeling, staring over the funnel-box which marked the lines of demarkation between first and second-class passengers; evidently seized with suspicion at so protracted an interview, even with so unlikely a *concurrent* as Madeleine concluded he would consider Mr. Behringbright, in his shabby array, to be.

Be it as it may, Madeleine at last felt the policy of putting Monsieur Le Tellier more at his ease,—and professed that she was growing very sleepy. Nevertheless, she declared she entertained (not without a cause) a strong aversion to going down in the ladies' cabin for repose. She loved, she said, to feel the fresh air blowing over her face; then she was never sea-sick. Lady Graham thereupon protested that she also would stay on deck with her dear child; and it became Mr. Behringbright's pleasing taskwork to procure cushions, and fashion up, to the best of his ability, a comfortable couch for the ladies on the deck. He did this very well, considering that it was his *début* as a chambermaid; and when his laughing and thankful mistresses took possession of their hard couch, it was a sight to see with what gallantry he insisted on stripping off his plaid and making it their coverlet, while he himself accepted a sailor's coarse jacket in lieu of what he despoiled himself of in their service. Happy, then, in his success, and with a heart aglow with a strange, unwonted, but most delicious sentiment, Mr. Behringbright modestly retired from the scene of so much happiness, to muse upon what could possibly have befallen him to lift the load of gloom and despondency from his heart, which a few short hours before had made existence appear to him a burden and a weariness scarcely to be sustained.

Such was his purpose; but wiser people even than the present writer have remarked that men are often balked of their more pleasant anticipations. Misfortunes and discomforts may be expected with tolerable certainty. Who ever knew the water-rate collector fail to call for his arrears, or the Queen's taxes neglect to demand themselves? Whereas one not unfrequently don't have an invitation to a ball or a dinner one had promised one's self, but is left to hear the description of the dresses at second-hand, concealing one's anguish under a pleasant, interested smile. Mr. Behringbright had hardly strolled a few yards away from the two fair sleepers (one of whom was awake, and continued so for a long time after) than he perceived the tall, gaunt figure of his Yankee disliker beckoning inauspiciously to him to approach. from the second-class

side of the dividing funnel. Not that Mr. Flamingo Brown cared in the least for the circumstance that his rate of fare entitled him to consider himself under a ban not to pass the demarcation—particularly with the big cheroot in his mouth he was now smoking, seemingly in rivalry with the august flue that towered above him. But that gentleman now gave it to be understood that the communication he was to address to Mr. Behringbright had to be out of ear-shot of ladies, “and such-like timorous cattle,” as he politely phrased it. The former was not displeased at the arrangement; struck for the first time in his life unpleasantly with the sound of his own name, excepting when his wife that had been did him the dishonour to bear it.

“Well, what is it?” he inquired, continuing his stroll until he was pretty close to his summoner.

“No, come, Mr. Behringbright, that won’t exactly do,” replied Mr. Flamingo Brown, with something certainly of a grim and sardonic humour in his expression, but none whatever in his tones or words. “You can be at no loss to know what I must respectfully request your attention upon. You have insulted a young gentleman, of a nation as little disposed as any under the universal sun to put up with impertinence, and you must give him satisfaction. He has appointed me his second and referee; and here I am to ask you to be so good as to name another gentleman on board with whom I can make arrangement for you two to fight it out as soon as you get to land.”

Mr. Behringbright did not appear in the least surprised, much less alarmed; contingencies both, in all probability, expected by Mr. Flamingo Brown.

“What nonsense!” he merely said, brushing the ash off a cigar of his own, which he had lighted, during the Yankee’s address, on the funnel. “In the first place, Mr. Brown, I am not a fighting man—don’t do any thing in the duelling way at all. In the next place, I don’t know any body on board whom I could take the liberty of asking to assist me, of my malice prepense, in a possible murder. And in the third place, I have offered to apologise in the amplest manner possible for an imaginary

rudeness towards your principal. What more can he require?"

"A *written apology*, to be inserted in all the Dublin and Belfast journals."

"Well, no; I have never yet been a writer for the press, and it is a little too late in the day for me to begin."

"Then you must fight."

"I don't see how that follows."

"You must either fight Monsieur Le Tellier, or he will *post you as a coward* all over the noble city of Belfast," said Mr. Brown, bursting into a huge, hoarse, cackling laugh.

"That will not damage my credit on the Exchange," replied Mr. Behringbright, with great composure, perceiving the mischief-maker's design. "Still, it will be rather awkward and unpleasant, certainly. The Irish ladies will think the less of me, no doubt—and I am rather anxious at present to conciliate their favour—if I refuse a warlike invitation of the kind," he continued, musingly; and concluding—very considerably to Flamingo Brown's astonishment, certainly—"Well, I *will* fight Monsieur Le Tellier, since he wishes it."

"You will, Mr. Behringbright?"

"Yes."

"He—he will be delighted with the news; thunder me if he isn't!" said Mr. Brown, so taken aback by what he heard that he felt it necessary to asseverate the statement, which he knew to be contrary to the truth, with particular vehemence. In reality, he had with great difficulty worked Camille up to the mark announced, with the assistance of the powerful agency of jealousy, by urging upon him that Mr. Behringbright would never dream of fighting a duel, whatever provocation was given him, and that he had only to persevere in demanding an apology to obtain one, and cut a great figure as a man of spirit and bloodthirsty resolution. Poor Camille had fallen, though diffidently, into the snare; and now Mr. Behringbright's compliance was certainly an awkward hitch in the plot!

"I suppose so; and he is in good hands, Mr. Flamingo

Brown, to keep him in the heroic humour," continued Mr. Behringbright, smiling caustically at the bullying Yankee's expression of doubt and surprise.

"Who's your backer, then?" the latter rejoined, in a surly tone.

"I will confide in *you* to see fair play on both sides."

"That's a compliment, at all events!" and Flamingo looked as if he could not quite make the matter out.

"No compliment at all."

"We have only, then, to settle on the place and the weapons. But for my part, you have such queer notions about things over here, I do not so much care to be in the matter—all by myself," said the proposer of hostilities, now quite confounded.

"As for *place*—any place where this young French gentleman and myself may have space for the exercise, will be proper enough. As for *weapons*—of course, being the challenged, I have the choice of *them*."

"*In course*."

"Then I choose—CUDGELS!"

"Cudgels!"

"Shillelaghs, if the word suits you better, with the wind blowing in our teeth from the Green Isle."

"You are making a jest of me, Mr. Behringbright—*Cudgels*!" roared Flamingo Brown, staring menacingly at his collocutor.

"*In course* I am; or, *of course*, as we say on this side of the Atlantic," said Mr. Behringbright, turning on his heel, and leaving the Yankee second to his reflections, alone in his glory.

CHAPTER XVII.

"FALSE PEARLS ARE THE LARGEST."

No further immediate harm followed on this failure in the provocation of hostilities. The night passed—the morning came—as a vast many nights and mornings have passed and come for so many post-geological ages. That is to say,

nothing very particular seemed to happen in consequence. The Prince Alfred sped on her way cheerfully over smooth waters, and entered the harbour of Belfast with colours gaily streaming over her, for the most part, ghastly, pallid, and sea-sick passengers; among whom Sir Orange Graham cut rather a conspicuously doleful figure. But this again was an advantage to Mr. Behringbright; who, for a wonder, not being in the least indisposed himself, was able to render very kind and efficient assistance to the disabled manufacturer: even, as he gratefully persisted for some time in believing, bringing him back from Orcus, just as he was about to *die* of his misery, by a plenteous pour of brandy from a flask. Meanwhile, the warlike and hostile emotions of Camille Le Tellier were out-hectored by the violent action of the same causes, which laid and kept him prostrate on the floor of the second-class cabin almost from the moment he had signified his adhesion to Flamingo Brown's challenge of his alleged insulter to when, the vessel sidling up into the docks, and anchoring quietly there, he staggered up on deck, with the look of a man who had been buried for a couple of days or so, and was then favoured with a resuscitation.

The Grahams were so much taken with their new acquaintance that even the gloomy and sardonic head of the family expressed his hope that Mr. Behringbright would accept an apartment in their house while his affairs detained him in Belfast. But this, for various reasons, was not exactly that gentleman's wish, although he was astonished at the pain he felt in the notion of separation from the fascinating daughter. It may be, the pang in question suggested to him reflections which he was not yet so sufficiently head-over-ears in his fanciful excitement to despise. Mr. Behringbright had an idea that he was becoming enthralled; and he had always made up his mind that no daughter of Eve, however richly endowed, should ever again lead him captive, even in chains of so much brighter link than those of his early, unblessed matrimony. He wisely considered so, that it would be much the best to shun the danger. But, besides all this, he did not relish the idea of facing Emily Maughan, without preparation,

under present circumstances. The conduct of that girl was assuredly inexplicable, unless—But he would not suffer himself to dwell upon a solution of the enigma which, to a vain and heartless man, might have been sufficiently flattering and pleasant. He determined, therefore, to write Emily a note, explaining his arrival in Ireland, on her account—his having assumed a name that was not his own, in order to avoid the troublesome observation and attentions to which it usually subjected him—and his wish to confer with her in private on the subject of some tidings Lady Glengariff had forwarded to him, and which all he had ever known and now heard of "Miss Maughan" more than ever convinced him to be some baseless variety in the hallucinations that unfortunate lady was subject to. He mentioned, in the most cursory style, his accidental meeting with the heads of the Graham family on board the Belfast steamer, and concluded by stating his intention of calling to see her early on the following morning. So much intervening time Mr. Behringbright determined to give himself to shake off the singular sort of glamour under which he felt himself to be passing, like the victim of some magic spell, to get rid of the domination of those inscrutable, apparently totally indifferent, and yet overmasteringly seductive and enthralling eyes! So much for Emily Maughan to steady herself for an interview which it forced itself upon his convictions could not but be an extremely trying and decisively uncomfortable one for her.

This note—which Mr. Behringbright wrote hurriedly, and in pencil—he confided, properly secured, as he thought, in a wafered envelope, to the charge of Miss Graham, who very kindly undertook the delivery, and expressed her sorrow that his pressing and important business elsewhere prevented Mr. Brownjohn from accepting her papa's invitation to his house.

It is probable that Madeleine even experienced some twang of apprehension and irritation at the evident purpose and intent of her victim to break through the toils; for Mr. Behringbright saw, for the first time, her finely-arched brows obscured by a frown,—which she hastily changed into an expression simply of sadness and discon-

tent, at so soon losing sight of a person whom she had begun to respect *and like* so much. She as good as said it with her wonderfully expressive eyes. Mr. Behringbright was profoundly touched, and had a vague conviction that he was behaving like some wicked sort of a male coquette or other, in the laborious affectation of indifference he got up in response to that mute appeal. But the thing was done, and he must abide by the consequences.

Accordingly, after seeing Sir Orange, Lady, and Miss Graham safely ensconced in a vast hackney-coach, that at some remote period of fabulous antiquity might have held a Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Behringbright trudged off by instinct to a first-class hotel, with his knapsack on his shoulders, and trying to give himself as much as possible the look of a tourist meaning to "do" the Giant's Causeway, and "all that sort of thing," in the North of Ireland. Thereby he rather surprised the first-class landlord and the first-class head-waiter, who immediately assigned him the worst bedroom in the house, assuring him that all the others were engaged. But he escaped any further nuisance and discussion with his late fellow-voyagers, who proceeded to a commercial hotel in the centre of the active and bustling city, where, in the midst of a score of sympathising commercial friends, Camille Le Tellier was at full liberty to relate how—in the confirmatory words of his ally—he "took the bounce out of a bullying English humbug of a fellow," and made him almost go down on his knees, to beg pardon for his offences, before Monsieur Le Tellier's no less heroic and inexorable second would extend it!

However, Mr. Behringbright was now ensconced in a degree of comfortable privacy, and enabled to wash, shave, and muse at his leisure over his recent adventure.

What could have been the reason why, after completing the two former operations, Mr. Behringbright spent such a time before the glass, brushing his rather stiff and unwilling hair in various comely layers, undreamed of before?—experimenting on various upright effects, and ending with being dissatisfied with all, and concluding on the absolute necessity of finding out the most fashionable hairdresser in the town, and subjecting himself to artistic

manipulations of the kind—for the first time for many a year? And yet why so? Had not those witching eyes looked at him in total oblivion of any thing ungainly in his external characteristics? On the contrary, as if they had a faculty of discerning, and rather preferred, a *diamond in the rough*!

This consideration, and an extreme natural aversion to barbers in the abstract, induced Mr. Behringbright to resolve not to persevere in the project. But his toilette finished, less to his satisfaction than ever before in his life,—dinner eaten, and about half a pint of sherry drunk, —a two-days-old *Times* and the *Belfast News-Letter* duly yawned over,—Mr. Behringbright began to find time hang extremely heavy on his hands, and to regret that he had put off to so protracted a period his visit at Sir Orange Graham's. The stranger's next best or, rather, only resource, however, remained; and though he had a profound conviction that, except for one house in it, Belfast was the most uninteresting city in the world, Mr. Behringbright determined to sally forth to survey it, and derive what interest he might from the contemplation of its *bleacheries*.

It must nevertheless be confessed, that when he was fairly out in the fine principal street in Belfast, George Cocker began to receive an impression that the town was worthy of some consideration on its own account. It is true that, accustomed to the immense activity of London, even the bustling and crowded main thoroughfare of the capital of the linen trade did not strike him peculiarly advantageously in a mercantile point of view. But Mr. Behringbright was unaccustomed to see the tops of mountains from the steps of an Exchange, or to feel the briny freshness of the sea on his lips, as he threaded his way towards one; and the novelty amused him. He was also philosophically struck by the singular aspect of the population, in which two races, kept as distinctly apart as if by some principle of nature, by religious antipathies and those of race, mingled without fusion, and occupied the same streets and byways, as distinctly separated as if by different zones of the earth. The wild, eager, joyous, laughing, gossiping Celt; the grave, moodily reflective,

masterfully-stepping descendant of the Scotch Puritans, who built up the city to its prosperity from a wretched fishing-village ;—there they were, figuring with unchanged and unmingled characteristics, side by side, after nearly three hundred years of co-existence on the same narrow circuit of Irish ground.

But it is not our business to play the cicerone of Belfast ; the task has been done already, as well as pen and ink can perform it, by the immortal Michael Angelo Titmarsh himself. It is enough to say that, engaged partly in these ethnological studies of the characteristics of the population around him, but chiefly still haunted by the image of her whom he had grown firmly to believe was the loveliest girl, not only in Belfast, but in all the world, Mr. Behringbright managed to get over a great deal of time in wandering about the city, and surveying its comfortless bleaching-fields beyond, and trying to persuade himself that, considering their great advantage to commerce, he was not at all sorry to see a summer landscape covered all over with such a flat and miserable-looking imitation of the snows of winter, as can be produced by acres of linen subjected to the action of showers of muriatic acid and vitriol, under the superintendence of the sun and a number of human creatures, bleached white, and shrivelled as lepers themselves, in the operation. And as, besides, he lost his way on his return from the survey of a singular eminence, which he found overlooked the harbour, it was dark night before Mr. Behringbright turned towards his hotel.

On the way thither the thought struck him that it would serve in some manner to divert the restless impatience that possessed him if he looked out, overnight, the situation of Madeleine Graham's house ; and, favoured by the shades that now overhung the city, formed a definite idea to himself of the locality glorified by the residence of his cynosure.

Accordingly Mr. Behringbright inquired for *Belhaven Square* of a ragged fellow with hardly a brim to his hat, but nevertheless circled by a memorial crape, now brown, but which had possibly once been black, and who was

running up and down a ladder, lighting the gas-lamps, as deftly as a squirrel—exchanging his jests and remarks with almost every other "street-b'y" of his nationality who chanced to pass.

This functionary, with characteristic volatility and obligingness, instantly leaped down half a dozen steps, and flourishing his link, declared his wish and intention to guide his honour "thar" without the loss of another moment in life, since the best directions in the world he could give would be himself running before him to show him the way—and the clearest! And without waiting to be refused, Barney O'Flanigan (so he stated himself to be called) set off like a will-o'-the-wisp, wriggling and jostling through the throng; and although Mr. Behringbright by no means desired any such flittertigibbeting on the private survey he projected, with equally characteristic acquiescence of good nature, he allowed himself to be so conducted; determining, nevertheless, to get rid of the inconvenient attendance as soon as he had reached the square.

Proceeding thus—Barney, still flourishing his link, and looking back occasionally to make "sartin sure" his victim did not escape him—on a sudden Mr. Behringbright was not a little annoyed by finding a figure brush past him, which, from its peculiarly handsomely-tailored costume, the glance he caught of the spiral curl of a Napoleonic moustache, the ambrosial scent of *millefleurs* and *condoletia* which accompanied its progress, the velvet-polished castor on its head,—if not by some other instinctive feeling,—he instantly thought he recognised as that of his late antagonist, Monsieur Camille Le Tellier! A glance at the shapely shoulders and waist, and wide-jagged pegtops, that next presented themselves to Mr. Behringbright's observation, opaquing the view of the rusty Barney, left no further doubt on the subject.

In spite of the strange excess of irritation implied in the Frenchman's recent demonstrations of hostility, Mr. Behringbright, it may be believed, was under no manner of personal apprehension in any thing that related to him; nevertheless he felt rather annoyed at the apparition, and willing to avoid the ridicule and inconvenience at once of

any further prosecution of so foolish and yet troublesome an episode, he hung back awhile to give Camille—who was evidently going his way—time to pass out of it. The impetuous Barney meanwhile—whistling the “Low-backed car” to himself, with satisfaction at the prospect of a shilling’s-worth of whisky that seemed looming in sight—shot on so far ahead that on looking back he found himself deserted by his follower, and anxiously returned on his steps to discern what had become of him.

Mr. Behringbright explained that he had stopped, thinking he saw an acquaintance pass, and desired his guide to proceed.

“Faith, then, your honour,” said Barney, “I would rather you went before, that I might make sure I was guiding you right, for I had as nearly lost you then as ever I should find you again if I did.”

“A guide, I think, should go before,” remarked Mr. Behringbright.

“On the way to heaven I wouldn’t dispute the case with your honour; but the streets are so crowded *here*,” Barney replied, with a delighted guffaw at his own wit.

“You must nevertheless go before, if I am to follow you,” Mr. Behringbright replied, rather amused, and thinking to himself that, after all, where Madeleine Graham dwelt might not inaptly be likened to some such regions of supernal bliss!

Barney perceived that his temporary master meant to exercise the rights of the position, and tacitly submitted. Again he whirligigged on his light and devious way, until after traversing several streets from the main thoroughfare, Mr. Behringbright was aware that they had entered what appeared to be an entirely new and very handsomely-built portion of the town;—such a quarter as is to be found radiating, in all the glories of architecture and novel improvements and convenience of all sorts, from the enclosures of most of our large old cities, under the impulse and overflow of modern wealth and building enterprise—a provincial Belgravia inhabited by successful traders.

By and by Mr. Behringbright, still led by his lamp-lighting will-o’-the-wisp, found himself in an extensive

square of lofty and stately-adorned new houses, almost worthy of the name of mansions, with a large and carefully-laid-out garden, ornamented with a fountain, numerous statues, and plantations of almost the only thing which wealth cannot accelerate to perfection—very young trees.

"This is Belhaven Square, and long may the green grass never grow over the fine broad pavements of it! We were talking of the sweet heavens just now, your honour, but this is a deal handsomer than the way up there—now isn't it?—and reminds one more of the broad road down below,—which yet hasn't room enough, they say, for all the people that take to it!"

"It is a fine handsome square. We have fifty like it in London," said Mr. Behringbright, rather annoyed by the latter observation—why, is not so clear.

He paused, and looked over the enclosure, feeling in his pocket at the same time for some loose coin with which to reward his guide's diligence, and get rid of him.

Belhaven Square was lighted with gas, on tall, classical-looking tripod posts. But it was still better illuminated at the time by a vivid moon. This gleamed along the ponderous Corinthian cornice of the palatial-looking pile that formed the western side of the square, and made all the windows glitter as if with sheeted silver blinds.

Mr. Behringbright remembered that Sir Orange Graham had told him his house was a corner one, and on the side opposite to where you entered from the business centre of Belfast. It must be over yonder there, then. But which? No, he would not suffer himself to ask of the gossiping fellow who had thrust himself upon him in the capacity of cicerone, and ten to one, in his habitual one of lamp-lighter to the district, was on chatting terms with half the servant-girls in the neighbourhood, if not all.

While Mr. Behringbright was thinking thus that he would ask no compromising questions, but was striving to make out a corner house that answered description to his satisfaction, his eye dwelt upon one nearly opposite. And he was curiously startled and stimulated into curiosity at the precise moment, by perceiving the haunting figure of

that Frenchman, gliding round by the iron railings surrounding a garden behind the residence, and seeming to be looking down into them with peculiar intensity of observation. So much, indeed, was he moved to consideration by what he saw, that his hand remained in his pocket, and Barney continued with his own outstretched, looking up at his patron as wistfully as a parrot for a knob of sugar.

"Och, then, your honour seems to see something a little too big for your eyes," said Barney, after a somewhat protracted pause of this kind.

"I see that young fellow, who appears like a foreigner, taking some pebbles from his pocket, and throwing them at the back windows of the house opposite," said Mr. Behringbright, after a moment's reflection.

"And it's not the first time, your honour. I've seen as wonderful a sight meself, barring that it isn't wonderful at all, when one comes to remember what a power of pretty girls, with the natest ankles in nature, are living under the roof that's above where he's throwing his pebbles so sly and soft; he'll never do the glazier any good that way, sartin sure."

"Whose house is it?"

"Would your honour like to know?—Well, it's the house of as *black a Protestant* as there is in all Belfast; and divil knows where there is a blacker—or a yellower, either—place, for that same, in all Ireland! They call him *Sir Orange Graham*; and he has been twice ex-mayor of the town, and he ordered out the soldiers on Boyne Water day, ten years ago, when the widow's son in Murphy Alley was kilt and murdered clean outright entirely, and half a dozen others put in their crutches for life."

"Sir Orange Graham!" repeated Mr. Behringbright, attending only to the name, and not at all to the included depreciation of the magisterial career of the person named,—"Sir Orange Graham!—What do you mean, then, you rascal, you, by saying there are so many *pretty girls* under his roof?"

"Why, you never did clap the eyes your mother gave you on purtier critturs than the under-housemaid and the

fammy de shamber, as they call her, with cheeks redder than bog-heather, and rounder and sweeter than ripe apples in an orchard! That's to say, for the likes of me and other poor fellows, who mustn't be too partic'lar in any thing; but then there's the young ladies too, and first and foremost of them all, Miss Madeleine's own beautiful self, that can hardly step out of her doors but the very stones seem to be wanting to set themselves up a-flowering under her feet."

"Very likely! very likely!" said Mr. Behringbright, soothed by this latter poetical echoing to his own dominant idea. "But what can this absurd foreigner be after?—one of these servant-girls you mention?"

"No, faith, your honour; so they have told me themselves more than a dozen times—which makes thirteen. Only women's words are not much to be depended on in sweethearting matters."

"That's *your* experience, is it, Barney?" Too—Mr. Behringbright was about to say, but he refrained putting himself on such a degree and kind of equality with the young rattle-pate Irishman, who had yet managed to bring him already into the familiarity of addressing him by his Christian name, communicated at the very outset of their acquaintance.

"Before I was married, your honour, a year ago come Whitsuntide again—sorrow to the day and hour! And that's why the girls hardly tell me any thing nowadays. Only I use my own eyes, and sometimes see into houses from the top of my ladder, over my nose—that's all."

"Is the *fammy de shamber*, as you call her, a French woman? He is courting after her, no doubt, if courting's the business, and not (which is a good deal more likely) *burglary*!" said Mr. Behringbright, exceedingly sulkily and discontentedly, and looking almost ready to summon the police, and give Monsieur Le Tellier into custody on the supposition.

"Oh no, sir; *coortin's* the business, if it's any thing. It's a young man that's very respectable, in the travelling line, and lodges at Widow Walshe's, in the Sea Gate. But as to foreigners, the young lady's-maid is a tight little

Limerick girl of the O'Haggartys there; and the only other foreigner I know of under the eaves yonder, is an English young lady they have at Sir Orange's for governess."

"A foreigner!"

"From London, your honour."

"Oh, from London—a foreigner! He means *Emily Maughan*," muttered the Caliph Haroun within his teeth. "But *that's* impossible!—No; what can it mean? Did you ever see this man here before, Barney, did you say?"

"Ay; and later than this!—When his honour, Sir Orange, is a-reading the family prayers, I'll be sworn!" said the lamplighter, with a significance that struck very displeasingly on his listener's sense.

"Does—well, does *any body* ever come out to him?"

"Faith, your honour, somebody opens the back front gate to him, you may depind, before he gets in and goes down."

"He goes in—*sometimes*—does he?"

"Or else he tumbles into the air, and is drowned in it clean out of sight, your honour. But I hope you are not questioning me with any ill on your mind towards any of the poor girls that may have him for a sweetheart, unbeknownst to Sir Orange? I hope your honour is a stranger in the place, as you gave yourself out to me. With that touch on your tongue of rale honesty and fair-meaning, I could have laid my hand on the altar you meant nothing either more or less than what you were after saying; and I had rather my tongue were on the outside of my cheek than have it wagging inside to do Mary O'Haggarty or Ellen Moore any mischief, if so be they have taken up with the likes of a monkey Frenchman, in the despair of me being disposed of—worse luck! who was a lad once—and that not so long ago—all the girls were after."

"I do not relish your senseless buffooneries, man! There's somebody coming up to the garden-gate now!—who's *that*?" said Mr. Behringbright impatiently, almost fiercely.

"*That*!" repeated Barney, elevating himself on his tiptoes, as if he thought he should thereby be enabled to

bring the object nearer to his vision. "Faith, then, I can't see for the bright moonlight! But it's got the little gray cloak on and the hood, and so it must be——"

"Well, who *must* it be?"

"But is your honour any thing in the way of friendship with his honour Sir Orange?—There isn't a severer master in all the black north for tyranny than he; he fined Mrs. Maloney five pound merely for breaking the windies of the workus in the desperation of her to get out to attend at her husband's wake, and sent her to prison till she could pay the damages—which is good as saying for ever and a day."

"*Who's* that woman speaking to the fellow, I repeat? I have nothing to do with Sir Orange or his affairs; but—but—I am some relation of the young *English governess* there, and if I thought——"

"Oh, if it's only about her your honour's consarned, I'll put you at your ase mighty fast! That's Mary O'Haggarty who's speaking to the young gentleman now; and, by the way, he goes on, starting and wringing his hands and stepping back,—telling him to go about his business; for the night leastways."

"No—look! She seems to consider what he says. She is whispering to him. And now——Isn't his hat going in among the trees out of sight? Is it possible that this foreigner is admitted, in this surreptitious way, into Sir Orange Graham's house?"

"He has gone into the garden, at all events, as certain as two and two!" said Barney.

"Here's a crown for you, my man! I have business with Sir Orange Graham—at his house, I mean. Miss Maughan, the governess there, is my relation! I must call upon her to-night—at once—this instant! Good-night, my good fellow. Don't stand in my way; my business is pressing!"

And so saying, Mr. Behringbright passed the mute and staring lamplighter, flinging the coin indicated in his hand; and in a few instants was knocking at the door of No. 90 Belhaven Square.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SURPRISE AND A RALLY.

THERE are other trifles besides *marriage* done in haste and repented of at leisure. At least, Mr. Behringbright was rather uncomfortably impressed with the notion that there may be such, when after a vivid rat-tat-tat at Sir Orange Graham's door, no notice being taken of the application for several minutes, he came to a sense of the position which his having yielded to impulse was about to plunge him in.

What, in point of fact, did he want at that hour of night, standing on the threshold of Sir Orange Graham's residence, demanding admission in so impetuous and commanding a style? He who had declined a regular invitation at a proper hour of the day—who had given himself out as an unoffending commercial agent—who had declared that *business* (stupendous word with men of business!) would prevent him from availing himself of the pleasure offered him until the next day—what did he there at that unseasonable hour, presenting himself under such peremptory and imposing circumstances? Forsooth, to demand explanations concerning what he had taken upon himself to decide was the clandestine entry of a stranger into the house of a family almost equally unknown to him, and over the actions of whose members he could pretend no right of interference, unless his assumed relationship to Emily Maughan could be supposed to confer any!

Mr. Behringbright perceived, of course, that this would not do. But what was to be done? Alas! the repentant interval afforded him suggested only the absolute necessity of announcing to the Grahams that he was obliged to call and see his cousin that night because *business engagements* would prevent him on the following day, and he wished to lose no time in giving her the best advice in his power in the matter relating to the Glengariff family! Yet this most inevitable, most necessary excuse would cut him off, very possibly, from the delightful prospect of spending an

hour or two, according to invitation, in the bosom of a family glorified by possessing so angelic a constituent as Miss Madeleine Graham!

However, what was done was done. Flight was out of the question. It was absurd to think of knocking at a door, as he had knocked, and then cutting and running for it like a larking schoolboy. More especially as Barney O'Flanigan remained a witness of the whole affair, standing petrified, with his crown-piece in his hand, staring after the rashly-generous donor, perfectly unable to reconcile the facts of his appearance with the munificence of the gift. Nay, I believe Mr. Behringbright had even raised the knocker, in an agony of embarrassment, observing that he was thus observed, and that evasion was impossible, to repeat his summons, when the door opened, and a tall lanky man, in a black livery turned up with orange, and with a face that looked like a funeral in itself, made his appearance within the space of a guard-chain attached to the door. But he could have stood in a narrower compass. In fact his whole figure irresistibly reminded the spectator of a coffin endowed with the power of locomotion.

This human coffin stared at the stranger in a rebuking and unpleasant manner, but only queried what might be wanted, in the sour expression of its top-piece.

"Is Miss Maughan at home, if you please?" Mr. Behringbright inquired, himself stiffening—by sympathy, so to speak,—in the reception he experienced.

"Miss *Maughan*?—what's that?" replied that glum porter, repeating the name which the stranger had pronounced in the usual English way, with a grim kind of sarcastic mockery in his tones, and in a Scoto-Hibernian accent, not too pleasant to hear. "But ye mean, I for-gather, Miss *Maffan*, the bit governess body? Where suld she be but at family-worship with all the rest of his honour's God-fearing family? Though I'm thinking she likes jingling on a kist-full of rubbishing pagan tunes they ca' a piano a sight better, of an evening, than any such saving work."

"I want to see Miss Maughan on particular business that can't well be put off," replied Mr. Behringbright, per-

sisting in his accentuation of the name in a spirit of defiance to this surly commentator.

"Well, if you were the King of England—if there was one—you'd have no call to interrupt his honour and his family at evening prayer for a blessing on the house. And I'll be hanged if I would have stirred a stump if I had known what sort of a customer was rattling at the door like a madman at this hour after sundown; and Sir Orange himself had twice to bid me before I rose from my knees, as it was. He'll be at the portion of Scripture now, and I'll not be for troubling him with a message to one of the servant-women from a stranger."

"One of the *servant-women*! What do you mean, fellow? Do you call Miss Maughan a *servant-woman*?"

"What is she better, I should like to know? What's any one that takes wage but a servant? But *fellow-worm*, let's ca' her, if it pleases you better, and tak no for an answer, in what respects your own hurry, just at present, my master!" the porter now replied, in a tone decidedly insolent, and which proved that, however thoroughly imbued with religious principle, he retained something of the old Adam in his carnal organisation.

"Very well! I shall not fail to inform Sir Orange with what unaccountable insolence his domestics receive a person who—" began Mr. Behringbright, not ill-pleased, nevertheless, with the chance of withdrawal with the honours of war which he discerned in the treatment he experienced, when, on a sudden, Lady Graham's voice pierced from a door set ajar, about halfway up the passage.

"Let the gentleman in, will you, MacIntyre? It's Mr. Brownjohn, Sir Orange, and there's that cross old stick going on at him as if—Pray come in, Mr. Brownjohn! You'll not interrupt for a few minutes or so, when we shall be done, and are as welcome as the spring, meantime."

Lady Graham presented herself with outstretched hand, and a face beaming with jolly welcome, in the hall as she spoke these last words; and the grim Cerberus, surprised and abashed, let the door-chain down, and flung it wide open, muttering as he did so,—

"Nay, if my lady says so, it must be. Come in, sir."

Mr. Behringbright stepped forward—not too willingly, perhaps—until the certainty that he was about to see the charming Madeleine again recurred to him. Then his eye brightened up, and he cordially returned her ladyship's hearty wring of the hand, expressing his earnest hope, at the same time, that he should not be considered intrusive, though he particularly desired to see Miss Maughan that night, as business would prevent him on the following day from doing himself the pleasure of accepting the invitation her ladyship and Sir Orange had been so very kind, &c. &c.

"Deary me, I hope not. Madeleine will be so disappointed! We were all of us so delighted and *obleged* with your very, very kind attentions on board. But she's so done up, poor girl, with travelling, that she's gone to bed quite early, and so you won't see her, and she won't see you to thank you. And I'm sure we all hoped we should, and over a good dinner too, and a bowl of claret-punch, which you won't get better, I'll be sworn, if you walked all Ireland over barefoot."

"I am exceedingly sorry, indeed, if Miss Graham—. I can endeavour to come to-morrow, Lady Graham. I am sure I interrupt at present, and—" stammered Mr. Behringbright, making a movement of retreat in a very confused state of mind at this intelligence.

"Oh, no! Sir Orange is pretty near the end of it now. It's only a custom in our family. Train up a child in the way he ought to go, you know, Mr. Brownjohn. But we'll have a snack of supper in a moment, and your cousin's in here on her marrowbones with the rest of us, and you can have your talk out with her, and I'll brew us some punch to-night, too—store is no sore—and to-morrow you can come and see Madeleine, when she's up, and—. What do you want to say, Mr. Brownjohn, that you are looking at me so earnest-like?"

Ay, what did Mr. Brownjohn want to say?

His eye was not usually so excessively expressive, it must be allowed; but on this occasion—it is of no use trying to put the change upon the sagacious and penetrating reader—on this occasion his eye really seemed to

say, almost as plainly as words, that he felt annoyed to excess at the reported absence of Miss Graham from the family conclave! And not only annoyed, but even, strangely enough, *alarmed* at the circumstance; for Lady Graham exclaimed on, without awaiting any further explanation, "Oh no, she's not very bad; only her head's all swimming still, and she can't get the clattering of the steam-engine out of it till after a night's rest. But I'm sure it's very good of you to take so much concern about her, Mr. Brownjohn, though most people *are* uncommon partial to her at first sight. Miss Maughan—Emily, my dear—here's your cousin, the English gentleman we told you about on board the steamer, come to see you. Never mind the rest of the portion; you can read it yourself by and by, dear, and Sir Orange, I am sure, will excuse you."

Nevertheless Emily did not accept the energetic permit. She continued fixed to her chair, apparently too absorbed in attention to Sir Orange's nasal, puritanical drawl, to hear that she was addressed. The little rosy girl seated on her knee, however, felt that she trembled, and looked up in her face with innocent wonder; and wondered then yet more to see how pale that wontedly not too high coloured, but gently pensive countenance had become. "O papa! what makes Melly so white? You've quite frightened her, too—with that story about Job and the devil! Don't read any more, papa; pray don't!"

"Silence, child!" thundered Sir Orange. "I've only two more verses to read, and if Miss Maughan is troubled in her conscience over them, it may be the sign of a blessed awakening which—"

"O bother you, Sir Orange! How you do talk of conscience! I only wish none of ours wanted more sending to the bleacher's than Miss Maughan's," interposed Lady Graham, with a somewhat peculiar significance in her tones. But finding there was still no response on Emily's part, she drew Mr. Behringbright resolutely on by the hand into a great, heavily-furnished parlour, where some seven or eight youngsters, of various ages and sizes, were sitting round a gloomy, tin-shaded lamp, at a table whence Sir Orange read prayers and the Scriptures every evening

in his harsh, dissonant tones, to a congregation whose relish for the tidings of salvation was probably not increased by the manner of their announcement. Thereupon this lay cleric closed his volume with an offended clash, and arose to welcome the intruder with a very ill grace, and an undissembled stare of surprise. Emily herself could no longer pretend unconsciousness, and although ready to faint, managed to raise herself, and extend her hand to her *cousin*, while a deep and burning blush replaced the deadly pallor of her complexion but a moment before.

Mr. Behringbright's heart smote him, he scarcely knew why, as he glanced at the young governess. He perceived the sudden change of complexion, and though not very deeply skilled in the external signs of feminine emotion, could not doubt that this meant much. In other respects he could not help owning to himself—and was surprised to find he did so with a strange, grudging reluctance—that Emily was very much improved. Experience of life and of sorrow had added a noble and touching dignity to her expression. The girlish loveliness which had always distinguished her countenance, had passed into a more exalted type of womanly patience, sweetness, and sensibility, that communicated a singular charm to it. And had not the fascinating vision of Madeleine Graham risen at the same moment in his gaze, Mr. Behringbright might have felt greatly more moved at the visible change than he could have deemed possible. But precisely at the instant a door behind Emily opened on the further side of the room, and Miss Graham entered, in a snow-white picturesque dressing-gown, trimmed all over with pretty little frills, her beautiful black hair flowing loose to her waist, her eyes swimming in a liquid bath of their own brightness, and looking in all other respects any thing but the worn-out and exhausted voyager which she had been described.

“Oh, I find I cannot sleep, mamma, and so I may as well hear papa read the——Goodness me! Mr. Brown-john here?”

These first words were nevertheless pronounced in

tones of the sweetest languor; the latter, of the most vividly-excited interest and surprise! No actress that ever figured on the boards of a theatre could have done it better than that accomplished actress on the stage of actuality. And, oh me! what a fine brightening up of hope and joy was instantly apparent, electrifying the whole being of the man in Mr. Behringbright, as he almost let Emily Maughan's hand fall from his pressure, stepping eagerly forward to receive the unexpected happiness.

"Miss Graham! Have I indeed the pleasure——"

"Really, sir, I had not the faintest notion—Pray excuse me, I am such a figure. Somebody might have told me, mamma. My hair down and all! But I had such a headache, and mamma thought bathing my head would do it good; but——"

"It is impossible for Miss Graham to look any thing but most charming; yet, believe me, if any thing could add to the effect of——" There Mr. Behringbright broke down in confusion. Else, no doubt, he meant to say something very complimentary and uncommercial indeed. But the syren understood very well what was meant. Her rich cheek deepened in its splendid flush, her lustrous eyes dwelt with an instant's intoxicating glow upon the speaker—then were modestly withdrawn; but not until the flash had seemed to pierce through Mr. Behringbright's stout tweed waistcoat into his very soul—wherever that might be situated—and to radiate off in streams of running fire through all his throbbing veins.

Emily Maughan's fair visage, meanwhile, faded back to its first almost monumental pallor.

"I will go and dress myself at once, mamma. Mr. Brownjohn will not be so cruel as to leave us again so suddenly; and I know a little pleasant gossip with so kind a friend will do me a great deal more good than trying to doze while one feels so restless and feverish. Dear Emily, your cousin will be sure and stay and sup with us. You must make him, if he will not."

"We've some prime corned beef;—we'll have a dish of oysters and kidneys ready in a moment. Archie, go

and tell MacIntyre to bring in hot and cold water and the spirit-stand at once. Orange, take Mr. Brownjohn's hat. Eldest boy's called Orange, too. It isn't Sir Orange I mean; don't be afraid. We wont sermonise *you*. Well, do go and do up your hair, Madeleine, and put on a frock."

"Pray *do not*, Miss Graham; you cannot by any possibility improve in your appearance, and—and I can only stay a few minutes to-night—and I should like to speak to my cousin for a moment. But I *will* come again to-morrow—whatever business I am obliged to put off!—I *will* indeed."

This latter superfluously vehement asseveration, one would have thought, was in answer to the pained, beseeching—yes, tenderly reproachful glance, of those wonderful eyes.

And now it cannot be denied that in her loose white dishabille, falling in its soft cambric folds around her graceful figure, and yet revealing the *svelte* proportions of her exquisite bust and slender girlish waist with voluptuous fidelity, Madeleine Graham was a most seductive and altogether irresistible embodiment of youthful female loveliness. When to this are added the beauty of her rounded pulpy visage and exquisite complexion, the melting languid glow in her seemingly impassioned eyes, the luxurious splendours of her loosened glossy raven locks, it is no great marvel that Mr. Behringbright felt not only ready to retract his refusal to stay to supper, but as if he never wanted again to leave so divine a presence! But somehow or other Emily's clear sad eye falling upon him at the moment restored him to himself.

"I should be most happy—very happy indeed, Miss Graham!" he said, answering the mute appeal, "but it is impossible to-night! I have an appointment which—I beg pardon, Lady Graham, but—could I speak with my cousin for a few moments? It is a family affair which—which concerns more than ourselves, or I should not take the liberty."

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. Brownjohn. Don't mention it; no apologies are necessary among friends. There's the

breakfast-room you can go into and be all to yourselves ; and I'll have something warm ready for you when you come out, which sha'n't detain you half a moment from your work. Emily, my dear, show Mr. Brownjohn to the breakfast-room," said Lady Graham ; it must be admitted, in a rather huffed and pettish tone at the commencement. But her daughter gave a glance about mid-way in the harangue, which she seemed to understand, and thence the change of tone.

Emily complied, though with a degree of hesitation amounting almost to reluctance, suddenly changing into a still more unaccountable brusqueness and velocity of movement as she led the way along the passage, followed by her supposed cousin, to a small but handsome chamber at the extremity, looking *through strong iron bars* into the common garden of the square.

Mr. Behringbright did not observe the vexed and suspicious glance with which Madeleine followed the movement, his back being turned ; but Lady Graham did, or to what had the observation reference she exclaimed to her daughter the moment the door closed ?—"Oh no, dear ! *they're* no sweethearts—don't fancy it !" adding, in a whisper, to elude Sir Orange's attention, who was busied in replacing his Bible in a case it occupied on the side-board, "And if they were, you'd beat her out of the field the second look you gave at him !"

CHAPTER XIX.

EXPLANATIONS—MALE AND FEMALE.

HAVING reached the breakfast-parlour, Miss Maughan found she could go no farther ; else I am not sure she would not have liked to extend her walk into the open air—perhaps farther yet, into the sea—at the moment. As it was, she had no resource but to clutch at a gas-chandelier dimly alit over head, pull it down, and turn up the burners into an extraordinary glare ; evidently without particularly knowing what she was about. Then rallying from the

weakness she felt in all her loving, feminine nature, by a still more womanly spirit of resolve she turned bravely round and faced Mr. Behringbright with a restored calmness and self-possession that did *him* good too. He was not very comfortable until then, but felt almost like a man detected in some act of infidelity by one to whom his fealty was due and promised. Nevertheless, he broke the silence that ensued for a few moments with visible embarrassment :

“ You received my note, Miss Maughan ? ” he inquired, “ written in the name of Brownjohn ? ”

“ Yes, sir, I did. ”

“ I suppose you were a little surprised at such a—such a whim, and at my claiming you as a cousin ? ”

“ I was rather surprised at *that*, in——But I know your great aversion to be made much of on account of your—your money and—and influential position—only ! ” poor Emily replied, with an audible faltering in her tones, which she endeavoured to explain by a strong *ahem* ! as if the voice required clearing ; nothing else.

“ I have an aversion indeed to be made a sort of golden idol of—I don’t say golden *calf*—though people make a fool of me often enough ! ” said Mr. Behringbright, adding, with very emphatic earnestness, “ And therefore I beg of you most particularly, Miss Maughan, as the greatest of favours, not to reveal who or what I am in this family ! I have a most special reason for it. ”

“ Certainly not, sir, since you desire it ! ” Emily replied, in rather faint tones ; “ I—and my poor mother and family—all of us—owe you too much not to pay the most implicit obedience to your wishes in any respect. But are you *quite* sure, sir, ” she concluded, in a hesitating accent, as if ashamed herself of the meanness of the supposition, “ that the Grahams do *not* know who you are ? They are a family very kind to me, I acknowledge—but who do not usually treat any but wealthy persons with the particular respect they seem to pay to you ! ”

This observation greatly and visibly annoyed Mr. Behringbright.

“ It is impossible—quite impossible, Miss Maughan ! ”

unless, in contradiction to almost the only request I ever made you in my life, you have revealed the fact!" he said, with most unusual pettishness and vivacity.

Emily was silent for a moment—rather a painful one, no doubt; but she answered, with a noble fidelity to the truth, of which it is not too much to say *not every* woman in her situation would have been capable,—

"I have not breathed a word of it, sir. Your commands would always have been sacred to me. But I had, besides, no imaginable motive to expose you to a kind of persecution I know you detest, and which would be so easily traced to my imprudence . . . in the family of Sir Orange Graham. So far as regards *me*, they are perfectly ignorant, I assure you, that you are any body but the Mr. Brownjohn you announce yourself to be."

"I am quite sure of it, my dear girl; say no more about it," said Mr. Behringbright, in a changed, pleased tone, which did not communicate its pleasure to his audtress. "But now let us talk a little of your own affairs. Let us take seats. I suppose it is the same in Ireland as in England, in being as cheap sitting as standing; and I really am tired with my voyage, and a long tour about the town all day. You owe me a little rest, besides, as you are the cause of my wandering."

A slight flush revisited Emily's spiritually-pale complexion, as she complied with the request, murmuring in a timid undertone, "I, sir! I am sure I was not worth any such trouble. But I hope it was more on account of the dear kind lady at Glengariff Castle—your friend—to whom I have occasioned so much discomfort that I am sure, if I had known what would come of it, I would never have left England, if I had died there of misery and grief!"

"Died of misery and grief, Emily!—Well, the change was good for you. Your mother had grown most nonsensically exacting and uncomfortable, I am sure!—I noticed it myself. But do you really mean to tell me, then, that all this about Lord Glengariff is not a mere fancy and hallucination of his mother's mind; that the young noble gentleman did really and truly—fall in love with you?"

And Mr. Behringbright looked with a degree of puzzled

incredulity at Emily, the nature of which she probably misunderstood. A kind of womanly resentment, of which she had scarcely believed herself capable, sparkled up in her expression, as she answered, with unwonted vivacity—

“I do not know that I am bound to account to you, sir, for other people’s crimes or follies ; or, perhaps, both in one, it would appear, in this case. But Lord Glengariff certainly professed to have taken a great attachment towards me, and has proved that he meant what he said, though quite against all my wishes and entreaties.”

“Do you mean he really did offer you *marriage*, Miss Maughan ?”

Again the astonished and incredulous tone rasped on some fine nerve in Emily’s organisation ; but she answered, with a spirit that did not unbecome her,—

“Marriage? Of course, sir ! I imagine that even if Lord Glengariff had not been, as he is, a noble and courteous gentleman, incapable of offering an insult to any woman, but, least of all, one under his mother’s roof and protection—he would not have *dared* to venture on an address to me in any other form.”

Mr. Behringbright admired the tone and look that accompanied this reply quite as much as the words ; and yet, somehow, their general effect was embarrassing and disquieting to himself personally, more than he had bargained for.

“What a young madman !” he exclaimed, not knowing what else to say. “He must have known that it was impossible.”

“He knew so when I had told him, sir ; not till then. Lord Glengariff is his own master ; no one has the power to exercise any control over him in that respect—I had almost said no one has the right. And I do not know of any law to prevent even a nobleman of high rank, unmarried, from taking to wife any woman at liberty to dispose of herself, whom he could induce to accept what, in *that* case, was really and truly the *honour* of an offer.”

Why *did* Mr. Behringbright dislike the warmth and emphasis of this admission, or assertion, whichever it was? He certainly did.

"Do you mean to say then, Miss Maughan," he remarked, very stiffly, after a pause, "that thinking, as you apparently do, with so exalted an admiration of this young and splendid nobleman, you have refused an offer from him to make you Countess of Glengariff?"

There was a considerable pause, during which Emily's countenance repeatedly changed both in hues and expression.

"I *have* refused an offer to become the wife of the Earl of Glengariff," she said at last, in a rather faint tone. "Not one offer, but many—at least, an offer many times repeated! You have the right to question me, sir; but I trust you will believe I do not make this statement from any paltry, vainglorious movement of female vanity. Not that I pretend to deny I feel all the force of such a compliment from the brave and high-hearted young nobleman, who would have defied the prejudices of society on my account, had I found it possible to respond fittingly to his devotion."

"And you really did reject him?" said Mr. Behring-bright, not able to realise the matter to himself—or most perseveringly resolved not to do so.

"Is it not proof enough that I am here, sir?" was the reply, with a strangely sad and yet most musical tremble in the accents.

"But really I can't understand, Emily Maughan! Have vulgar social notions entered so deeply into your soul also, that you yourself deemed you had no right to—to accept such an offer?" said the millionaire, strangely puzzled, and hardly knowing what he said, or how he said it.

Emily Maughan was silent for a minute—a full minute. She then replied, with a quiet, subdued, exceedingly mournful sedateness,—

"Such was not my motive, sir. I believe that the woman whom a man desires, above all others, to make his own—if she can reciprocate the sentiment—has the *right* to become his wife, no matter what the difference in such adventitious circumstances as birth, or rank, or fortune can create, may exist. But for any woman who does not

feel a preference for a man above all other men—to marry him—I take to be—only another name for—for—forgive me the dreadful word, Mr. Behringbright!—there is no other for the dreadful thing;—marriage in such a case appears to me only another name for *prostitution*!”

And pronouncing the word fraught, indeed, with horror so unutterable to every really womanly-hearted woman, Emily Maughan gave a dry sob, and looked aghast at Mr. *Behringbright* (she had uttered the name!), in wonder what he would think of her audacity. And this was what he thought, for he said it,—

“You are right, Emily!—wonderfully right!—I honour, I admire, I am *amazed* at you! Do you think that there are any more women that do think and act like you in all the world?”

Ah, why did he not say, *I love* you for it? It is most certain that for several minutes Mr. Behringbright did feel as if he *loved* as well as honoured and admired the noble girl for what she had done—for what she had said. But that other haunting image arose in his remembrance—I know not how brought thither,—and dictated the close of his speech, and he only repeated several times, “I honour, I admire, I am *amazed* at you!”

Neither did he dare to ask of Emily, Why did you not prefer the noble Glengariff to all the rest of his sex? He assigned her a motive—took it for granted—without *that* preliminary.

“I understand it all now. You felt that such a match—entirely disapproved by his mother—by every one who had a right to a voice in the matter—could only end disastrously. You have acted wisely—most wisely. I am only sorry for the poor youth himself.”

“And so am I, sir—oh, so am I!” exclaimed Emily, melting on a sudden at this juncture into a flood of tears. “Oh, if you only knew how poor Lord Glengariff has been going on in Belfast since I refused, finally and for ever, to go back to the castle—to become his wife—you would pity him!—you would save him!—for his mother’s sake, noble, unfortunate fellow,—if for nothing else. Oh, he has plunged into such extravagant courses—gets drunk—

knocks people about—fills the whole town with the uproar of the strange things he does—gambles—sets the officers in the barracks on all kinds of dreadful *larks*, as they call them. They tell me his horse fell dead below him when he won the last steeplechase. Oh, you cannot tell, sir, how madly he goes on ; so if you do not look after him and save him, sir, I do not know what he will come to. Do promise me, Mr. Behringbright, that you will save Lord Glengariff ! I know he respects you. He may, perhaps, be led by you out of his madness. I have been a thousand times on the point of writing to you—only I thought—I thought——” But she grew silent then, unless the crimsoning of the “eloquent blood” in her face spoke.

“I am sorry to hear such a sad account of the young earl’s proceedings.—I will do what I can with him, if he will listen to reason,” said Mr. Behringbright, rather coldly. “His mother has written to me, in fact, to beg that I would look after him ; although apparently unaware, as well as myself, that Lord Glengariff was going on in any such extraordinary way in Belfast, if we put aside the rest of the escapade,—I promise you I will, Miss Maughan !—*Very young* man as Lord Glengariff is, he cannot be so senseless, if he sees that his passion is altogether hopeless.—But it seems to me the strangest thing in the world—I almost think it *is most* strange, Miss Maughan,—why, or wherefore, you—a young, handsome, highly accomplished, witty, wealthy, military nobleman at your feet, offering you love and a coronet—I don’t quite understand, I own——What I mean to say is, do you think that all young ladies—that the young lady of this house, for example,” he continued, desperately, “would *refuse such an offer?*”

Emily Maughan was evidently struck all of a heap, as the saying is—not a very intelligible one—with this question. Human nature, however, could not be so overtaxed as to answer in the affirmative, possibly expected ; at all events, she could perceive, with the fatal perspicuity of the passion that possessed her, even in its workings in that pure and tranquil-welling blood—earnestly desired.

"I do not think *she would*—you mean Miss Graham, of course? Rosa Matilda, Honoria, and little Mary Anna are too young to be thought of. But I have kept Lord Glengariff's secret as cautiously as I shall yours, sir, as long as you desire; and although he forced a visit upon me in this house . . . twice . . . and Miss Graham saw him both times, by accident, he took care not to have himself announced to me as who he really was, but as a messenger from Lady Glengariff to me. I had grown very uneasy, not hearing from her, as we had arranged, and easily fell into the snare. But Miss Graham remains ignorant of who and what his lordship is."

"Miss Graham has seen him! And is he such a handsome, such a *very* handsome fellow as you describe, Miss Maughan?" exclaimed Mr. Behringbright, with a sudden flush now on his cheek.

"I beg your pardon, sir; it is you who have described Lord Glengariff by the epithet. I have not alluded to his personal appearance," replied Emily.

"No; I don't suppose you have. But he *is* a *very* handsome fellow—universally acknowledged to be so; and *did* he see Miss Graham on these visits?"

"Certainly! He could hardly miss that," said Emily, suppressing the additional remark that arose to her lips—Miss Graham took abundant care both to see and be seen on the occasion.

"And do you mean to say—?" Actually Mr. Behringbright was about to exclaim, Did she mean to say that, after seeing Madeleine Graham, Lord Glengariff could possibly persist in perceiving that any other woman in the world was worthy of the least attention or pursuit? But he checked himself in time, so far as regarded the utterance of the words. Their sense glided on, like a stroke of the keenest steel—albeit invisible in blade and point—right through the heart of Emily Maughan. She put her hand, indeed, upon it, with a gesture of actual physical pain for an instant. Only an instant, and then she replied to the unuttered words, very calmly and steadily:

"Yes, sir. I do not think that Miss Graham is at

all the kind of woman—not much, at all events—to attract the notice of a man like Lord Glengariff; at least, if I may judge from the fact that he has taken so much notice of *me*.”

“What vanity!” thought Mr. Behringbright. “What wonderful creatures for vanity women must be, when even this modest, shrinking young creature fancies—! You must remember, Emily,” he continued aloud, in a rebuking fatherly tone, “that you fascinated this foolish young fellow in the midst of solitude—woods, and mountains, and lakes, and all that sort of thing—beside the sick couch of an elderly, mind-shaken woman, with no possible competition to disturb the effect of your mild insinuating ways. Not that I imagine for one moment you intended the mischief you effected, or depreciate your very proper self-esteem. But, my dear girl, it is really not too much to suppose that if Lord Glengariff had been exposed to the influences, that will be sure to be brought to bear upon him in a more enlarged acquaintance with the world, considering the great advantages of position he enjoys—” There Mr. Behringbright paused, in some confusion, feeling that he was making a most ungallant remark and inference.

“But so I told him, sir,” said Emily, with perfect simplicity of acquiescence. “Only he would not believe me.”

“We must try and reason him into the belief, then; but if he has really seen *Miss Graham* with indifference—I am not quite sure—really, Emily, if it were not for Lady Glengariff’s prejudices of high descent and station, I do not know but that Lord Glengariff, if he is turning out so wild as you represent, might do a great deal worse, after all, than marry a sensible, kind-hearted, pretty girl, with manners and accomplishments fit for any rank in society—whom he seems so wonderfully—I mean so passionately—to prefer to the rest of her sex.”

Some bitter emotion—it would not be fair to analyse to all its component elements—writhed round Emily’s lips as she listened to these words, and, had not heroic female pride forbidden, would have burst in a shower of heart-

wrung tears from her eyes. As it was, she merely said, "I was not studying for a compliment, sir—only saying the truth, so far as I understand it—in the way I understand it," and was silent. She dared not venture on a repetition of her announced resolution as respected the wooing of this noble suitor, lest her voice should fall into some betraying quavers, or the motives of so strange a refusal should be demanded too cogently. But Mr. Behringbright understood the silence very well, for him, and interpreted it.

"Well, then," he said, rising, "our confidence is at an end. I must do what I can to-morrow to look up Lord Glengariff, and try to induce him to return to a sense of duty and propriety. Aided so extraordinarily by the fair object of his Quixotic outbreak, I do not doubt to succeed."

"I wish you every success, sir. It annoys me more than I can say to hear of his lordship's vagaries. But how is Lady Glengariff? And how is it I have never heard from her?"

Mr. Behringbright heard the words; but his own attention was suddenly caught and absorbed by another object.

"God bless me!" he exclaimed, staring out of the parlour window. "*What's that—who's that*, sneaking out of Sir Orange's back railing into the public garden of the square? I see there's a private gate into it from the house—there, just turning round that clump of holly bushes!"

Emily looked in the direction indicated. The clear moonlight allowed an object answering the description very exactly, in point of manner, to be visible *now* on the gravel-walk of the public garden of the square—but a figure which Mr. Behringbright had distinctly seen glide out of Sir Orange's enclosure, despite its efforts at clandestine movement.

"*That person?* Did he come out of the house, do you say, sir? Do you think?" said Emily, in an evidently startled tone, and also watching the receding figure with fixed attention.

"Not only did I see him come out of the house, but, just when I arrived myself, enter it, in an equally furtive and forbidden manner," returned Mr. Behringbright.

"You do not mean to say *that*! you must be mistaken, sir."

"I am not. Do you know who it is?"

"Do I know who it is? I am not sure that I do, or that in any case I should feel myself justified in stating," Emily replied, with visible hesitation.

"Is it some sweetheart—as they call the poor senseless wretches—after some servant-girl of the place?" said Mr. Behringbright, with a vehemence which produced quite a different effect on Emily Maughan, who replied, with great coldness :

"I really cannot say with any certainty, sir; and I do not feel myself called upon to hazard surmises on the conduct of any of the persons who reside beneath the roof that shelters me."

"Well, of course, quite right, and it is no business of mine either. I commend your prudence, Miss Maughan," said Mr. Behringbright, quite pettishly. "Let us return now to the company—I have not a minute further to waste. I had ordered dinner at my hotel, and there will be a hue-and-cry after me shortly. Good-night—God bless you! Have you any notion where Lord Glengariff is to be heard of?"

"None whatever."

"Well, no matter; I shall soon find him out, and leave Ireland as fast as I can after. It seems just like any other place, only duller. Pray don't trouble to accompany me; I can find my way back to wish Lady Graham good-night."

And as if he had unwittingly pressed a nosegay with a nettle in it to his nostrils, the visitor flung himself out of the apartment, leaving Emily full of sorrowful surmise, and of a vague sentiment of jealousy mingled with indignation, and a strong reinforcement to certain suspicions and anxieties relating to Madeleine Graham that had long haunted her, and which she felt that delicacy towards the family whose salt she ate, and a generosity of fair-dealing

innate in her breast, had induced her injudiciously, towards herself, to suppress.

But what had been hesitated and withheld had produced a great effect with Mr. Behringbright. The least considerative of observers might have noticed the marked change in his demeanour when he returned to the apartment in which Sir Orange Graham and his family were now awaiting their guest, drawn up in battle array, with an excellent supper-table spread, and the promised bowl of punch diffusing its nectareous steam around. He made his appearance merely to wish them a formal good-evening, protesting an absolute necessity to return immediately to his quarters at the hotel; declined the "least taste in life" of the brewage; scarcely accepted, though he did not absolutely refuse Lady Graham's earnestly renewed invitation to "salmon and a cutlet" next day at four; bowed in the most distant possible manner to Miss Graham; and, in spite of all remonstrance and entreaty, made his way out of the apartment, and out of the house, without tasting bite or sup in it. For if all were true that he heard and had seen, whom—whom could that French puppy come after to court, in so basely clandestine a manner, in Sir Orange Graham's house, save and excepting his beautiful eldest daughter?

CHAPTER XX.

"DIVARSHION."

It was not until he had got fairly out of the house into Belhaven Square in this angry mood, that the consolatory recollection suddenly occurred to Mr. Behringbright that he had seen the parties together on board the Belfast steamer, and that they had kept aloof, and seemed to be perfect strangers to each other.

Yet what more likely, it came back upon him, than that the relations between them being of so clandestine a character, the lovers—if lovers they were—should have observed this distance, under the direct observation of the

father and mother? Yet again, why should *she* have singled him out with such evident kindly appreciation if her affections were previously engaged? Had he been known to be who he was, the case would have been different. But Mr. Behringbright felt certain he could depend, not only upon the word, but upon the interest of Emily Maughan, that she would not betray the fact. And no one else in Belfast was likely to have communicated the intelligence in the brief interval that had elapsed. Or, supposing such an improbable circumstance as that Mr. Flamingo Brown should concern himself to make it known, Sir Orange Graham's unaltered and, sooth to say, rather churlish demeanour, established a certainty that the tidings had not reached him, and consequently still remained a mystery in his family.

A little consoled by this reflection, but still very uncomfortable on the subject, and resolving in his resumed habitual mind that there was nothing but deception and misery attached to every thing womanish, Mr. Behringbright had gone some little distance in a wrong direction to his hotel, when he felt a light but strenuous grasp laid on his arm, and a friendly voice exclaim, "Please, your honour, are you taking your right way, now, to the place ye want to get at; not to take on me the freedom to ask you which that is?"

"Why, where *am* I going to at present, Barney?" said Mr. Behringbright, recognising the lamplighter, and replying in truly Hibernian fashion, as if the *genius loci* were powerful upon him too.

"Yer honour knows best;—but you're not going the road you came, unless it be backwards, and that is the way to be the farther off the place you're going to, the nearer you get to it!"

"I want to return home to my hotel—the William and Mary."

"Then yer honour's face is turned clean against it, and you will have to walk the world round before you step in at the back door!" replied Barney. "The way you're treading to leads to the Barracks;—and there's such a game going on there to-night, I should scarcely be setting

a gentleman of your honour's peaceful demeanour much in the way of presenting yourself among such a set of fire-rakes, no how !”

“Why, what's going on at the Barracks, Barney, to deter a quiet citizen from taking the way to them?” said Mr. Behringbright.

“Fakes, then, isn't it my young Lord Glengariff's party to the rigiment, after winning the steeplechase on them all the other day in the county Antrim? And ain't they the b'ys to get a-larking at all manner of divilment and divarshion on their way back to the town, after their dinner and wine? And I heard say they were all to patronise the theatre to-night, against the sober and respectable citizens, as they call themselves, who are for putting it down because there's some Frenchwoman, or other I-talian crittur of that sort they don't like, come to kick about and show her airs and graces, in man's clothes, in what they call a *bally*. And the officers and his lordship, who is the merriest b'y that has been in Ireland, or Erin 'ither, since my Lord Slaughterford's days (Heaven rest his sowl! for he never did harm to mortal man but himself), are all for it, out of spite to the others, purtinding to be such saints and stuff like that, as if every body didn't know what goes on among them on the sly. And there's expected to be the purtiest row in natur! But what I am thinking is, that if they should meet *us* on the road, they'll be taking us for mimbers of the oppozit faction, and perhaps riding over us, or getting some of their people to toss us in a blanket, as they all but did it to two of the town-councillors a few days ago, in the very market-place, for saying *they* were wild Irishers, only fit to have ruffled and raffed it as troopers in King James the Second's time, that was dethroned in Londonderry city hundreds of years ago. But your honour must have heard of the occasion ;—and how the Orangemen there fed on rats and caterpillars, before they'd give in to the thruth?”

“A curious preparatory diet, Barney, and they did *not* give in, after all. But do you mean to say there is some young Irish nobleman who makes himself conspicuous in such paltry and scandalous riotings as you describe?”

"Is it *conspik'ous*, your honour says?" replied Barney, attaching a meaning of his own to the word thus simplified. "Faith, thin, it's my Lord Glengariff that would make himself a hole through an army, if it stood in his way to life and fun. And isn't it he, then, that's the delight and salvation of the whole town, with the sport he makes in it ever since he come, which is little better now than a month? But in that time hasn't he been up before the magistrates a dozen times, counting twenty to the same, for window- and head-breaking, and putting out the lamps, and pulling the mayor's nose on the bench, and all manner of divarshion, till every body says he will bring back the good ould times again in Ireland, unless he's previnted; and all the fools in Belfast, barring meself and a taste of one or two others, perhaps, will have it he's as mad as a March hare, or will be before he has done? And some of them say that his family was always mad before him; but it's only the rale Irish blood boiling up in his veins, for he comes of the ould kings of Ireland who were before the flood, and they were always rather a helter-skelter spoonful of hot broth, I have heard the ould people, who remimber their times well enough, declare!"

"And you say this row is expected to be at the theatre to-night?"

"Yes, sir, if the officers have any luck in life, and can but get the Orange 'prentice b'ys here to show fight," replied Barney, with a delighted grin at the exhilarating prospect. "And it'll not be long now before it begins, for I heard say the *bally* was to come on directly after the black man has killed himself first and his wife after.—No, it's the revarse, I mane,—and there's hardly a seat's taken but it's for the row about the French *danseroose*, as they say she is called, giving her her right name in her own country."

"Glengariff must have gone entirely off his pivot indeed, if all this be true!" thought Mr. Behringbright. "I must try if I can ascertain how things stand with him before I interfere. Can you show me the way to the theatre, Barney, do you think?" he concluded aloud.

"For the same crown-piece, is your honour after man-

ing?” said Barney, scratching his poll, and appearing to think that in that case he should decidedly get the worst of the bargain.

“Why, you rascal, you ought to have guided me all over the town, and rocked my cradle at night, for half the money?” exclaimed George Cocker, partly amused and partly provoked at the extortionate spirit that appeared to have been aroused by his very liberality. And indeed the case stood confessedly thus; for Barney replied, with a shrewd smile, “And so I would, your honour, if you had not paid me for my *trouble* beforehand, and twice as much as it was worth. Only I’m thinking if your honour goes to the play, I must go too, and that knocks a shilling off the money for the gallery!”

“*You* must go too?”

“Faith, yes; is it turning tail for you I’ll be, when your honour’s getting yourself into trouble in a faction fight? For it’s all the same, whether it’s at a theayter or a fair, if the shillelaghs are flourishing in the way of people’s heads.”

“Well, I will stand the expense of your entertainment too, Barney, excepting in so far as it may be your pleasure to go in for a share of the distribution of cracked skulls. Have you any further objection now to continue me your valuable services?”

“None in life—or in death ’ither, for that matter, your honour!” exclaimed Barney delightedly; and with his characteristic lightness and friskness, he flitted once more before the liberal English traveller towards the scene of dramatic enjoyment, which it appeared was to be heightened in so characteristically national a style by a violent collision and fracas.

“What can Glengariff mean by such conduct? Has love made a real madman of him? However, I hope I shall arrive in time to save him from any share or leadership in this last extravagance,” mused Mr. Behringbright, as he followed in Barney’s fitful footsteps; insensible, in his anxiety, to the fact that he had scarcely himself eaten or drunk all day.

It struck Mr. Behringbright, when he entered the Bel-

fast theatre, as rather an ominous circumstance that there were very few ladies present. Even the few members of the female sex who showed at all would not have been allowed by the once-famous Man of Refinement, Mr. Tremaine, to merit the designation in any ultra-fastidious sense of the word. Perhaps it would be safest to say there were some *women* present who did not appear to be of the higher orders of society. And to confirm the notion, they were chiefly scattered in the pit and upper galleries, where they sat with bonnets hung before them, crushed into curious shapes by the carriage of market vegetables and other burdens, which are preferably borne on the head by the fair sex. Men in general like their freights best on their shoulders; it certainly cannot be for the same reason, since women are not usually considered strongest *in their heads*.

Another fact Mr. Behringbright noticed at once. He procured himself a box with difficulty, and yet on entering the house he perceived the boxes were nearly all empty. The rest of the theatre was densely crowded.

Under these circumstances he conceived himself justified in bestowing an invitation on Barney O'Flanigan to take a seat in the same compartment as himself, on a conviction that the general tendency of things was to a democratic equality. Moreover, he considered Barney's assistance as elucidator, or even possible physical ally, might be of advantage in the approaching threatened demonstration. The good fellow seemed to know every body and every thing in the town, and to be quite willing to communicate his information. So, although Barney modestly excused himself—firstly, on the score that he was not fit company for his honour; and secondly, by a declaration that the tail of his coat was too long to sit down upon in such a narrow place; and although he protested he could see and hear just as well through the boards at the back of his honour's box—Mr. Behringbright would not be said nay, and Caliph Haroun soon found himself seated side by side with the Belfast lamplighter.

"A touch of nature," as our Garrick of the melodrama has so often proved to Adelphi audiences, "makes the

whole world kin.” Yet, though there was some very roughly-natural handling of the unfortunate Desdemona going on at the moment they took their seats, neither Barney nor his treater confessed the universal relationship predicated by attention to, and sympathy with, the fair sufferer’s struggles for sweet life. “Oh, bother to her! Let her get it over as asy and quick as she can; for it’s then the rale sport will commence. That’s why the boxes are all impty now till the officers come, and my Lord Glengariff’s whole tail—though they’re as full as ever they can stem—I heard Barry O’Leary—that’s the checktaker—say this very morning. Sowl and body! what a scrame she gives! as if she was not accustomed to be murdered night by night ever since she was born!”

“But why is there all this commotion about a dancer, Barney? How can it matter to any one how a ballet-woman is received or rejected in a provincial town like this?”

“Oh, don’t your honour know the main consarn in it is about religion?”

“About religion!”

“Faith, then, yes! *Madame Limper* is what one party calls a *convert* and the other a *pervert*, your honour. She wint out to the *Krimeer*, if you plase, last war, with one of the French rigiments—so I hear the story told—as a Sister of Mercy, which is next door to a nun, your honour knows; and there if she didn’t allow herself to be wheedled and fooled out of her own true faith by a fool of a half-Irish boy in one of the rigiments we sent out there too—and turned Protestant, on condition he’d marry her. And he never mint any thing of the kind; and so she came over here and *persecuted* him for abduction—or something of the kind—and seduction, and breach of promise, and bigamy, and all manner of things. But she lost the cause, the bad crittur! for what could she have been else, denying the religion she was brought up in for the sake of a husband who wouldn’t have her after all? And so she’s obliged to take to the stage, and twirling on the top of her toe for a living; and some takes her part, and some don’t, and wherever she goes there’s mostly a darlint of a kickup between the two factions. But people come to the the-

ayter any how, and so the managers don't care what it's for, and has always the police in riddiness with their shillelaghs drawn, and the military riddy to turn out, and the fun goes on—and why shouldn't it?"

This was the first time Mr. Behringbright had ever known religion concerned in the pirouettes of a dancer. But it did not seem very strange that it should be so in Ireland; only, when he considered the violent fever-heat at which the antagonism of race and creeds was maintained in Belfast, he began to apprehend that, unless something were done to prevent it, the playhouse contest was not unlikely to degenerate into a real and bloody affray. Would his influence with so principal a ringleader as Lord Glengariff was affirmed to be suffice to restrain him from stirring up the mischief? Did he, in fact, possess that influence any longer in the strange unruly mood the young lord seemed to have passed into?—Mr. Behringbright knew that he had once a very great sway over him; but did it continue?

Revolving this question, Othello went through his last agonies of love and remorse over the body of his martyred bride without almost any degree of conscious attention on the part of Mr. Behringbright—although the "noble Moor" stabbed himself so well that there was a general uproarious *encore* of the death-blow. This was not complied with by the sooty hero of the evening, but he received all the honours of the curtain amid a pretty general demand of "How are you off for soap, now?" and cries of, "Ye'd better have let the ould man kep' his daughter, now, hadn't ye, gineral?" and other such-like Irish playhouse pleasantries. Then Othello retired—let us hope, to oysters and Dublin stout—from the scene of his sufferings, and the band struck up a tune; from which moment the real diversions of the evening commenced.

"What are you after calling that jig, Mr. Mellows?" cried a b'y from the gallery, at the conclusion of the first musical interlude.

"The *Divil's Drame*, sure, ye blaggard!" shouted a voice, instantaneously, from a remote part of the pit. "Fiddlers! let's have the *Divil's Drame* again!"

“Sure, you’ve only to wait till you’re fast asleep yourself, blaggard to ye back again ! to have it without troubling the bagpipes !” yelled the first voice in reply. “But it’s not the *Divil’s Drame* at all, I tell you ; it’s the *Cuckoo’s Nest* that’s after being played. And we’ll have it again. Larry O’Leary, if it’s you with the bagpipes I see,—strike up the *Cuckoo’s Nest* !”

“No, no, no—the *DIVIL’S DRAME* !” now resounded in clamorous response from different quarters of the theatre, while an equally stirring uproar in nearly as many quarters demanded the “*Cuckoo’s Nest*.” And the contest continued for upwards of five minutes, amidst the most astounding uproar and confusion ; the partisans of what appeared to be almost equally-popular but rival melodies increasing in fury and violence until the house resounded with the noise of the contending hurricane, the band meanwhile not daring apparently to comply with either demand.

“What is the meaning of this, Barney ? Is *religion* concerned in the noise about these two tunes, too ?” said Mr. Behringbright to his companion, who had taken a considerable share in the demonstration.

“Oh, bless your honour’s life, and take you to the angels when you’re too old to go any where else ! it’s *one and the same tune* they’re all calling for, only, bedad ! by the differing names.”

This did confound Mr. Behringbright. This was, he thought, out-Irishing every thing Irish ! But so the case stood : To the Celtic portion of the audience the *Cuckoo’s Nest* was the *Divil’s Drame*, and they would not have it played under any other designation, though identical in all the notes of the music and its variations.

Luckily, something occurred to turn the attention of the pugnacious *auditorium* at this moment. A clattering of doors, a noise of movement, laughter, and confabulation, which seemed in no way restrained by respect for the assembled audience, announced a numerous arrival. In effect, the boxes filled all of a sudden, as if by magic, with a throng, chiefly of young men, many of them in officers’ undress, who took possession of the seats that had hitherto been unoccupied, with every appearance of designed swag-

ger and challenge to a portion of the audience that, immediately on the arrival, changed the uproar they were making over the rival tunes to a storm of hisses, and the noisiest imaginable demands for "Silence! silence!"

Mr. Behringbright glanced with anxiety among these groups to recognise Lord Glengariff; but when he did so—which was not immediately, in consequence of the singularity of the costume his lordship had adopted—he was struck with dismay in the conviction that the young nobleman must in reality have bidden adieu to his senses.

Certainly a costume of a most peculiar fashion, and of as peculiar a hue and texture. Lord Glengariff's tall and noble figure was arrayed from the neck to the ankles in a garb that fitted it almost as closely as the natural skin—of coarse stuff, and of a deep saffron colour. Over this he wore a long black cloak, of rough curly wool, descending almost to his heels, a broad-brimmed felt hat, with an immense yellow plume, a silver-embossed leather girdle, decorated with a case of pistols, and an ancient flat-bladed Irish dagger, called a *skene*; and half-boots, or rather brogues, of untanned deerskin, completed his strange garb. And this alone would have settled the fact of his madness in the sober estimation of George Cocker Behringbright, had not Barney O'Flanigan whispered him that it was his lordship's proper dress as an ancient Irish chieftain of the O'Donoghue blood, and that all the "makings" of it were of pure Irish manufacture, "forebye the colour," which should have been "green as the grass under your feet." But Barney was mistaken there, for *saffron* was the ancient Irish national colour before Henry VIII. granted or dictated *green*, with much poetical, and some slang-metaphysical suitability, as the proper field for the armorial bearings of the verdant Isle of the West.

In other respects the young chieftain of Glengariff looked every inch a chieftain—a natural-born ruler and leader of men. His frame was of remarkable strength and muscular activity in its development, for so young a man. A beholder, imbued with classical lore, might have figured to himself that he contemplated a realised ideal of the goddess-born Achilles, allowance being made for a strongly

Celtic cast of physiognomy. Still Mr. Behringbright could not but own to himself that the effect was very handsome and striking on the whole. The long, gleaming black hair ; the square, but flexible and shadowy, eyebrows ; remarkably brilliant, fire-fraught, impassioned eyes, that changed their expression with every varying mood and thought of the fierce, tender, resentful, melting, restless spirit within, redeemed some degree of disproportion and harshness in the rest of the features, and plunged Mr. Behringbright into renewed surprise and incredulity at the possibility of any woman—above all, a youthful woman in the situation of Emily Maughan—having proved really insensible to so much personal attraction, in union with the allurements of rank and position.

Mr. Behringbright—no man, perchance—could or can form to himself a notion of the absorbing dominion of the first attachment a woman’s heart conceives for an object of the other sex—the exclusive desire, the disgustful rejection of every other—which takes possession, as it were, of the very root and fibre of her affection—a kind of sentimentality which, a good deal more than any other cause, fosters the numerous race of old maids, in whom these islands abound, and who ought rather on that account to be considered their choicest decoration and honour, instead of being the subjects of the impolite jeers and mockery of absurd chits and beardless boys, as too frequently we find they are.

Indeed, considering the masquerading dress, the extravagant gaiety and *nonchalance* exhibited by Lord Glengariff, surrounded as a leader by some half-score of the wildest young bloods and larkers of the neighbouring barracks—which, being blessed at the time with the lodging of three Irish regiments, made all Ireland ring with the renown of their gamesome, headlong doings—in conjunction with his engaging person and attributes, Mr. Behringbright’s mind was crossed by a very ugly and uncomfortable suspicion that matters were not, and could not be, as they had been represented to him, between Emily and her pretended honourable wooer. Had she not, on the contrary, fallen a victim to the seducer’s artifices ? and was

the whole story of her flight, and Lord Glengariff's offer of marriage, a romance invented to throw a saving veil over the realities of the case? The pain this notion gave Mr. Behringbright sufficiently punished him for forming it, and surprised him by its depth and poignancy.

What was certain, however, was that Lord Glengariff appeared not only in good but in extremely lively spirits and good humour with all around him. Yet the uncomfortable conviction forced itself upon Mr. Behringbright, that the young man owed no slight portion of his visible elation to the influence of intoxicating drinks; nay, there was something even of wildness and extravagance beyond the usual conditions produced by a profuse indulgence in hospitality, which seriously alarmed his ex-guardian. The young earl laughed excessively as he bowed to the burst of cheering which greeted his entrance into the theatre; for his lordship had become the darling of the Belfast populace in a wonderfully short time, by feats of daring and defiance of authority, that of all others most attract and dazzle the Hibernian imagination.

"Something must be done," thought Mr. Behringbright, "or he is indeed going off on the ancestral track!"

Perhaps, though, after all, Lord Glengariff had done the best thing for himself he could in plunging into the riotous amusements and dissipations he had resorted to, on his chagrin and disappointment in the failure of his suit with Emily Maughan. Nature is seldom mistaken; and while with one sex she relieves the overburdened heart by a good strong fit of hysterics proper, with the male sex she betakes herself to what may not improperly be styled *hysterics in action*. A mad and senseless gaiety of external existence, which has no foundation in the inner realities of the feelings, but serves to scatter and dissipate emotions that, if pent up, might do a great deal more mischief to their unlucky possessor.

The arrival of the support for the *débutante* of the ballet seemed, however, the signal for no further delay. The prompter's bell rang, the curtain rose, an Arcadian landscape with moonlit waterfalls appeared, and the Taglioni of the evening, whose Terpsichorean feats were so

strangely mixed up with the religious feuds of her spectators, made her appearance in a rapid and agile leap and run—arrayed in the costume of a nymph, chased on, as it seemed, by a couple of satyrs, executing a frenzied gallopade in pursuit. And she rushed to the front of the stage, flinging her arms aloft, in the most approved ballet form of demanding the help of the gods and the plaudits of the spectators, springing high in the air to alight at last on the right toe. But in that brief space one of the most awful contending uproars it is possible to imagine had arisen on all sides of the theatre; and Mr. Behringbright had recognised in the skinny, berouged, and recklessly audacious candidate for the honours of the Belfast ballet—the *Madame Limper* of Barney O’Flanigan—the Made-moiselle Olympe Loriôt of his own experience on a former theatrical occasion.

It must be confessed that, on the first impulse of this recognition, Mr. Behringbright joined most furiously in the hissing demonstration into which a pretty fairly balanced half of the audience broke on the appearance of the *débutante*. But he was very far indeed from countenancing or approving the way in which the occupants of the galleries—chiefly the very lowest of the populace, in all respects but elevation of material position, which sometimes happens in other cases—proceeded to exhibit their disapprobation. A shower of orange-peel, nuts, and even larger and more formidable missiles descended upon the stage—some of them rather unpleasantly near the *danseuse*. She faced it all, however, with great courage and determination, supported by the deafening cheers and vociferations of her partisans, for several minutes, with much the scornful, defying look and attitude of the famous actress of yore, who declared it was enough for her if the “knights applauded.” But still rougher experience awaited Madame Olympia,—such was the name she had now assumed on the bills (transmuted by Barney into Madame Limper),—and some one in the gallery aimed a mockery wreath of carrots and cabbages at her head therefrom, with such force and good-will that it covered the unhappy *débutante’s* visage with blood, and either stunned her, or induced her to let

herself fall flat, as if she were deprived of life and consciousness, on the stage.

The uproar that had been was as nothing compared with what followed upon this.

The partisans of the *danseuse* arose in a frenzy of exasperation; hundreds of voices demanded who had done the deed. Another hundred tumultuously declared the doer. Condign vengeance was threatened and deprecated on all sides, while the culprit, terrified at his own success, and the punishment threatening in consequence, partly pointed himself out to reprisals by making an attempt to escape.

It was at this moment that Mr. Behringbright distinguished, in the midst of the deafening tumults, shouts of "Glengariff has him! Glengariff has him!" "Long life to your lordship! throw him right over amongst us! We'll make room for him to get to the ground!"

The next moment, and he perceived with a really sickening sensation of horror and dread the elegantly-arrayed person of Camille le Tellier struggling frantically in the grasp of the young chieftain of Glengariff in the upper gallery, who seemed literally and truly bent on complying with the humour of the populace—on forcing down to the edge, and hurling over the barrier, the doer of the (to say the least) very unmanly outrage committed on the prostrate *danseuse*.

"Good heavens! Glengariff is mad—he is drunk—he will do it!" flashed through Mr. Behringbright's brain.

A moment after, with a vigorous rapidity of decision and action which fairly "tuck the life and the breath out of Barney O'Flanigan," and left him planted behind with amazement, the quiet dilatory Englishman had dashed out of his box—rushed upstairs to the upper gallery—arriving precisely at the moment he was most needed; when Lord Glengariff, wild with a fury and exasperation which frightened off all interference, had dashed his shrieking antagonist backward, close to the balusters of the gallery, and was applying all his herculean strength to heave him bodily over among the excited crowd below!

So, at least, it seemed to Mr. Behringbright; who,

pushing his way headlong through the throng, appeared to himself to arrive just in time to prevent the completion of the effort by the most strenuous exertion of his own strength, exclaiming at the same time,—

“Glengariff! are you going to make yourself a murderer, for the sake of a miserable dancing drab like this woman on the stage?” adding—for he too was for the instant dismayed with the dreadful glare the youth turned upon him, on the interruption of his vengeance,—“You must know *me*!—You must remember your father’s and your mother’s oldest friend! Glengariff! in their names—”

“Mr. Behringbright!” exclaimed the noble young desperado, staring as if he had seen an apparition, “you here!”

“Let this French fellow go—you have punished him enough—and leave this disgracefully riotous scene with me, Lord Glengariff,” said the opportune arrivant, assuming at once the authority his age and former position seemed to give him the right to assume. And he even ventured to withdraw, with some violence, the angry nobleman’s grasp from Camille’s collar, which had been severely torn, with other portions of his habiliments, in the struggle. But Lord Glengariff had by this time probably returned in some degree to his senses, or was subdued by the manner of his ex-guardian into acquiescence. Camille found himself released.

“My God!” the latter exclaimed, staring at Mr. Behringbright with eyes almost out of his head. “It is you have saved my life!—How shall I repay you?”

“By completing your escape immediately—without another word,” replied Mr. Behringbright; and Camille, desperately taking the hint, darted past his late opponent, and succeeded in effecting an exit from the house, though not without some further scuffling and exchange of blows and vituperation with some of the persons in the gallery, who were not inclined that he should escape thus scot-free.

Luckily, by this time the police—whose presence had been all along anticipated to be advisable—made their appearance in great strength in various parts of the theatre;

and Olympe's *début* in Belfast came to the usual conclusion of her occasions of display in Ireland. The house was cleared out ; half a dozen of the rioters or so marched off to the nearest station-house ; and some score of broken heads and bloody noses presented themselves in the streets of Belfast to tell the tale of the night's amusement.

Greatly to Mr. Behringbright's own surprise and satisfaction, Lord Glengariff yielded to his further display of authority in inducing him to leave the theatre quietly in his company, without a struggle or a remonstrance. Nay, he consented, with scarce a mutter of refusal, to get into a *car* with him, and allow himself to be driven, in his company, to the William and Mary hotel, remote from the scene of riot, and from the companions at whose head he had figured so portentously.

CHAPTER XXI.

ROMEO AND FRIAR LAURENCE.

MR. BEHRINGBRIGHT continued to be astonished at the powerful influence he found he possessed over the wild young Irish chieftain of the flame-spirited blood of the O'Donoghues, so evidently set alight with the sparkle of champagne and claret. Lord Glengariff allowed himself to be led into the hotel without observation ; and his companion conceived very good hopes on that account—never having been in love himself at the age of twenty-one—that he should be enabled to bring back the young man to a sense of what he owed to his family, and society in general, and a relinquishment of his insensate passion for a governess, who didn't even return the frenzy. But I must say that I do not understand *all* the satisfaction this idea gave Mr. Behringbright, since he had no notion whatever of Emily for himself ! We are made up of very subtle networks of brain- and heart-filaments, no doubt, we mortals ; but could the vague consciousness that *he was* beloved by Emily Maughan inspire a shadowy jealousy of the possibility of another's finally usurping his place in

ner affections? Or did it give Mr. Behringbright yet more airily-founded satisfaction to continue to find reason to believe it possible for a woman to be insensible to the attractions of so glorious a young wooer—in some inexplicable connection with Sir Orange Graham's charming, but perchance coquettish daughter?

Still, the Dutch-descended Englishman was not in the least prepared for the demonstration of feeling—the passionate climax of emotional excess—that awaited him, when entering the private apartment he had requested of the first-class waiter at the William and Mary, and sedately inquiring of Lord Glengariff what he would have for supper, that young Celtic nobleman threw himself desperately on the hard, professedly horsehair-stuffed sofa, and, covering his face with his hands, burst into what appeared to Mr. Behringbright a perfectly womanish and hysterical passion of tears and sobs.

“Mutton chops and crisped parsley,—and bring up some brandy and soda-water at once!” said Mr. Behringbright, with agologetic emphasis, to the waiter; desirous at once to get rid of his witnessing, and to insinuate the pardonable occasion (in Ireland) of the weakness to be witnessed.

“Yez, zir,” said the waiter; “coming!” and he vanished.

“*Brandy and soda-water!* You think that I am *drunk*, then, Mr. Behringbright?” exclaimed the object of the solicitude, fiercely springing up from his recumbent attitude, and dashing his tears and long black hair from his visage, with the action and snort of a wild young horse which it is attempted to snaffle. “But I *am not*, sir! I am not drunk! I am *mad* with misery and despair; but it is not in the power of any kind or quantity of intoxicating liquids to give me a moment's relief from the tormenting consciousness that my whole existence is gone—that I must be wretched to the last hour of my life! Nothing can do it; a whole keg of whisky might kill me, but could not give me forgetfulness of that one thought! Existence has become a dream of hell—it *is* hell! Although I am here seemingly on

earth and in the flesh, I am, in reality, one of the damned in hell!"

"You rave, Lord Glengariff! Let me tell you, you are—you must be—either drunk or mad!" said Mr. Behringbright, greatly alarmed at this outbreak.

"Have it your own way, Mr. Behringbright! If I am not mad now, it is only a matter of time! It runs in the family, and you are quite right! I tried to escape it by devoting myself to a quiet country life, with a calm, lovely woman, whom I adored, and with whom I could be content to spend existence in a desert. But my mother will not have it so. *She* will not have it so! And what they have made me they have in me! All Ulster will tell you what a headlong madman I have become in my doings! and my intellects will soon follow!" So saying, the young earl clasped his hands with a frantic gesture to his brows.

"Good God, my dear Glengariff! I had no notion that—that—*love* could so besot a man!" exclaimed Mr. Behringbright, very much distressed, and perhaps a little puzzled. "So it *is* all true, then, and no hallucination of your poor mother's fancy, and you *are* in love to this frantic excess with—with the little governess I sent for your sister from England?"

"The *little governess!*" repeated the youthful Celtic lover, glaring with utter contempt at the speaker. "She is the light of the earth in my eyes; and were she gone from it I would never open them again! The *little governess!* She is the loveliest, kindest, truest, sweetest, dearest woman in the world!—the only woman in it! And if I cannot win her to be mine, I will never, never, never wed another!"

Mr. Behringbright was astonished at what he heard. Could Emily Maughan in reality be such a concentration of every feminine perfection? Was it *his* eyes that wanted the requisite clearness of vision to perceive such surpassing attraction, or were those of my Lord Glengariff filled with delirious reflections of his own imaginations?

"It *is* the case then," he inquired, affirmatively, "that you are gone off crazy, Ferdinand, with a fancy for *Miss*

Emily Maughan, and you are so nonsensical as to suppose you cannot live without her?"

"I will *not* live without her!"

"Why—but bless me! if the whole romance I have heard be founded in any degree in fact, Miss Emily Maughan *won't have you*, my dear boy! What are you talking about? Frantically in love with a governess who *refuses you?*"

If Mr. Behringbright had been very profound in the mysteries of the tender passion, *hélas!* he might have known there is nothing more certain to fix one's young affections than to have them declined, "with thanks for the perusal." Half the authors are made through indignation at the senseless publishers, who reject one's first sublime effort—and *all* the faithful lovers!

"Refuses me! Ay, she *refuses me*, as you say, and it is therefore—it is therefore I am going on as I am in Belfast! The *cold-blooded, cruel, heartless, mercilessly calm* creature, I am determined, shall witness the ruin she has made! Her blue, placid, unalterable eyes shall watch me pouring headlong down the steepes of destruction! And when I am dashed to pieces at the bottom of the rocks, she can smilingly look over, and murmur in her softest, meekest tones, 'It is my work!'"

And again the late doughty, terribly-in-earnest champion of the playhouse burst into another torrent overflow of passion, in the shape of tears, inarticulate ejaculations, and hysteric sobs.

Mr. Behringbright looked at the young Celtic chieftain as the entire British nation has for many an age looked at the entire Hibernian one—with a conviction that he did not understand him, and was not likely to.

"You don't mean to say, my dear Ferdinand," at last he remarked timidly, "that you mean to disgrace yourself, and all your friends, and your illustrious descent, and I don't know what all, and hurry yourself by all kinds of mad excuses into your grave, because *Miss Emily Maughan* cannot—she has told me so herself—cannot reciprocate your attachment?"

"She has told you so herself, has she? God help me!

I am lost then, indeed ! I'll blow out my brains instantly ! But is it really the case ? Do you think it really *can* be the case ?" continued the aghast lover, staring at Mr. Behringbright as if indeed now partly bereft of his reason.

"Perhaps she only says so. I don't say so. I know nothing about it. It does seem highly improbable that a young woman in her condition can really be in earnest in her refusal," soothed Mr. Behringbright.

"No, no ; it is all my mother's mad pride and folly that have banished her from Glengariff, and induced her in her turn to show a natural and becoming spirit in rejecting an alliance so contemptuously repudiated by the only person in the world who has the right to any opinion on the subject. Don't you think this must be her reason ?—her only reason, Mr. Behringbright ?" ejaculated Lord Glengariff.

Thereupon Mr. Behringbright himself felt a flush of hot colour to his brows and cheek. But truthfulness was a part of his nature, and he answered by a counter-query, "Unless you think she has somebody else whom she prefers ?"

"Whom she prefers !" exclaimed Glengariff, in a voice that would have done a good deal better than the wonted horn to awaken the echoes of his native lakes. "Ah ! let me but find out who that is preferred by Emily Maughan, and I'll hurl him from Belfast over the Giant's Causeway into the sea ! Prefers another ! Whom can she prefer ? She has never, I may say, *seen* any body almost but me ! Nobody ever came to Glengariff ! It is impossible."

"Here is the waiter with the brandy and soda-water. Be calm," said Mr. Behringbright. But somehow or other he felt his manhood impugned by the seeming acquiescence he gave to the fiery chieftain's assertion. Yet, after all, did he *know* any thing to the contrary of the statement made ?

"Leave the stuff, and begone !" said Glengariff, passionately, to the unoffending waiter ; though, to say truth, the poor man was diluting the duties of his attendance rather needlessly, to "take a good look," as he phrased it, at the hero of so many notorious adventures as the young

Munster earl had of late figured in. He started—and disappeared.

“Well, what do you say? You never heard of any body, did you, *she preferred* in England?” continued Lord Glengariff, with rather wild eagerness.

“Take a little of the soda, at all events; it will quiet your excitement; for it must be owing chiefly to the strange, disorderly life you have been leading of late,” said Mr. Behringbright, eluding the question.

“What! you have heard of *some one*, then? I have a rival in England? But how can that be? She never had any letters, excepting from her mother, all the time she was at Glengariff. Tim Molloy, the steward, who has the care of the post-bag, has told me so a thousand times. Excepting, perhaps, one letter—no, two, from *you*, Mr. Behringbright. And she could not have received letters on the sly, among the mountains there, at Glengariff.”

“Then all I can say,” replied Mr. Behringbright, feeling rather confused, and anxious to get out of the dilemma, “is, that it is altogether inexplicable, if she don’t prefer any body else, why she don’t accept you. And even if she did prefer somebody else—unless he had superior worldly advantages to yours, and I don’t see well how that could be possible, to say nothing of your personal endowments, Ferdinand—nay, you know I never flatter—I can’t make it out how any woman could possibly refuse such an offer.”

“Oh, but you don’t know *this* woman! What a beautiful, candid, high-souled creature she is! She would refuse an emperor, unless she loved him; and that’s what renders it so priceless to win her—would render it, I mean! You don’t suppose, Mr. Behringbright, I could not get—hundreds of thousands of girls, I was going to say—but plenties on plenties—who would marry me, and think themselves very lucky—dukes’ daughters, and all that sort of thing? But I would not take a million such in exchange for this one peerless creature!”

“Oh, you are absurd, Glengariff! You talk downright madness! Why, there’s the young lady in whose father’s house she lives;—have you seen *her*? I should think,

if you had, you would never rave on so about Emily Maughan!" said Mr. Behringbright, with more warmth a good deal than he had hitherto exhibited in his part of the dialogue.

"What! *that* girl?—that girl with the horrid glowing black eyes, and hair that seems to me to be always glittering and twining like black snakes round her head?" said Lord Glengariff, in a tone of disgust and aversion, which only excited Mr. Behringbright's incredulity and suspicion. "Oh, but I tell you *what*," his lordship continued, with sudden animation,—“she might do to provoke Emily out of her apathy and pretended indifference; for she can't, as you say, be in real earnest—unless she is in love with some one else, whose throat I'll cut at once, if I can find him out! Oh yes, oh yes; don't you think it would be a capital dodge of me to pretend to transfer my affections to Miss Graham? I am sure she gives one encouragement enough for a flirtation—and it would go on quite direct under Emily's eyes! There would be no mistake about that; whereas I don't know if she hears of half the frantic things I do on her account in this cursed town. Isn't it a capital idea, don't you think? If once Emily could fancy herself in danger of losing me, really and truly, she would alter her tactics, I daresay, and not care whether my mother liked it or not.”

“What a despicable, unmanly notion!” exclaimed Mr. Behringbright, with great indignation. “It is perfectly plain you are not sober, Glengariff, to talk such degrading nonsense! One would think you were some vile coquette of a woman!—Moreover, I am certain you are quite mistaken in Miss Graham. I never, in all my life, saw a more modest, retired, diffident young girl. I daresay she has never seen *you* yet, though you may have been in her company. . . . And, egregious as your vanity seems to be——”

“Forgive me, my dear sir! I know I am talking horrid nonsense, and that I could not get up even the appearance of indifference to my Emily, much less feign to address any other woman, were it to save all man- and woman-kind from perdition! But what would you have me

do under the circumstances? I must have Emily Maughan for my wife, or I will never have another! I wish I had been shot in the trenches before Sebastopol—and my mother was so pleased when I came back alive.”

Now Mr. Behringbright was—as I have all along declared—about the reverse of a Machiavel in the whole uncomplex structure of his mind; and his views of bringing about his purposes were as little as possible in the artfully-involved, deep-contriving, serpentine-weaving style of the Italian politician. Nevertheless, I do not take upon me to say that the answer which arose to his lips, suggested by the simplest instincts of *self-preservation*, could have been much improved upon by the subtle Florentine.

“What would I have you to do?—*recommend* you to do, Lord Glengariff, of course you mean? You are your own master now, and responsible only to yourself for your actions. Why, if you really think that Emily’s chief objection (and a very proper objection it is too,—a very proper pride it is!) lies in her consciousness of your mother’s aversion to your union, I should say your best, your only course is to *go home*, and endeavour to obtain your mother’s consent to it.”

“Ah, I never thought of that,” said the poor youth, eagerly clutching at this straw of hope. “But do you think it possible that Lady Glengariff—?” He paused, seeming to revolve the utter unfeasibility of the chance.

“I am satisfied of one thing, that your mother has already the greatest possible kindness and regard for Miss Maughan, though she labours under the delusion that she has deceived her, and has in reality laid herself out to entrap you. You can easily dissipate this notion now; you have certain proofs to offer of Emily’s noble sincerity and disinterestedness in the whole affair. Your mother is passionately attached to you, Ferdinand; and if she sees that the happiness—perhaps *the reason*—of her only son are concerned so deeply, as they evidently are, in the matter, I think her prejudices must yield—I really think they must. Besides, your mother is very ill, Glengariff—*very* ill, indeed, I fear—and you will be wanting in all natural affection to the best and tenderest of mothers, if you refuse

to return and console what may possibly prove her death-bed, by your presence, and the assurance that you have not plunged into the irretrievable misfortunes her excited imagination has shaped in your absence and silence."

"Is my poor mother so ill?" said Lord Glengariff, evidently rather affected at the picture. "Why, then, would she refuse herself the gentlest, the kindest, the most lovingly attentive and beneficent of nurses and friends, in such a daughter-in-law? Talk of 'ministering angels,' Mr. Behringbright! Oh, if you had seen that divine young creature watching over mamma with me in that sick-chamber, in her last terrible attack! You can't imagine it; but she diffused a sort of air of paradise around a poor mad woman's dungeon—for it is little better, you know, when my mother is in one of her paroxysms. There was something so delightfully cool, reflective, tender, in all she said or did. It was like going into a garden after a beautiful sunshiny shower to hear and to see her at times, when she was comforting and soothing her poor mamma, as Gwendoline calls my mother. Every thing became so ravishingly sweet, and lovely, and serene all at once, when she stepped into the room. Oh, I cannot, I will not—I will not live without Emily! And how can my mother, even for her own sake, think of such a thing?"

"Well, Ferdinand," said Mr. Behringbright, looking and feeling rather queerly, "I am sure, if you pleaded your cause as well to your mother as you have to me, she *must* yield to your wishes."

"Do you think so? I would kneel a month at her feet if I thought it would do any good; for I am now convinced—you have convinced me, Mr. Behringbright—that Emily's objection to me can only be my mother's ridiculous prejudices and holding back," said Lord Glengariff, brightening up in every feature, as if with a sudden burst of sunshine upon his visage. "But I don't think either I could do much with her, unless I had the support of some one in whose judgment she places dependence. Now, I know my mother looks upon you as a sort of god of clear and passionless reason, in every thing; and if you would go home with me into Kerry, and lend me the assistance

of your opinion and arguments in favour of my offering my hand where my heart is irrevocably engaged, I will set off for Glengariff to-morrow in your company. I know I am going on like a madman in Belfast—and shall become one very soon in reality, if I am not put a stop to ; and no one can put a stop to me but myself. So you will doubly save me—doubly save the only son of your dearest friend, who once saved *your* life, I have heard, Mr. Behringbright ; and there will be at least one happy marriage in the world, of your making. And instead of a race of madmen ruling at Glengariff, and assisting to make the councils of the nations—oh, what sober, wise, benevolent, *half-English* O'Donoghues will flourish at last under my father's roof-tree !”

And in the caressive wheedling style of a child eagerly demanding a favour—and the earl was in truth very young—Lord Glengariff took Mr. Behringbright's hand in one of his own, and smoothed back his rather hard, gray-tinted hair from his forehead, looking him, with earnest entreaty, full in the face.

Now it must be said that, in the first place, Mr. Behringbright was exceedingly moved by the appeal. He had a kind of fatherly affection for the youth, who had been reared under his supervision, and whose noble and generous qualities he well knew. All his own opinions and feelings, derived from woful experience, were in favour of marriage effected on motives entirely apart from the ordinary considerations of lucre and advancement. He had no prejudices whatever as respected the illusions of high birth and descent—how should he ? He cherished philosophical or physiological notions—one hard word is as good as another—that fell quite into the ideas of the heir of the great O'Donoghue, as to the propriety of changing the course of a blood which had become tainted with insanity ; perhaps—and from very good motives too—had early inoculated the young chieftain with his ideas in that respect, observing how foolishly bent his mother was on pursuing the system of limited intermarriage which had produced such a result. There were half-a-score of motives besides, if the union in question could be brought

about, which rendered it desirable. Poor Emily! what could more effectually wean her from that most unsuitable—above all, that hopeless—direction to her affections, which Mr. Behringbright had begun to dread? How else could it be possible to save Glengariff from the frantic abyss he was galloping towards? Even a little time gained might prove of incalculable advantage. It would retard the catastrophe, at all events, and reasons might be found in the delay to prevent its occurrence altogether.

As for himself—a journey into Kerry at this particular time, would it suit his views?

Mr. Behringbright recalled the seductive image of Madeleine Graham in his mind's eye, and murmured to himself, No! The next instant, and the clandestine figure of the French coxcomb came back on his recollection, sneaking out of Sir Orange Graham's back premises—his presence within altogether unaccounted for, excepting on a supposition that he was received there as a surreptitious wooer. And by whom else, in that case, but by Madeleine Graham? And Mr. Behringbright firmly muttered to himself, Yes!

This private decision he communicated to Lord Glengariff aloud, in the form of a reluctant acquiescence in the request made to him to accompany him home to Glengariff Castle, and join his expostulations, with those of the enamoured prodigal returned, in favour of his desired union with Emily Maughan.

He should be ready, he concluded, to start on the following evening, by the mail-train, at six o'clock, for Kilarney. He had engaged to dine with a friend, he said, at *four*. He could not deny himself this last satisfaction (so he intended it should prove); but he took care not to inform Lord Glengariff where his engagement was, lest he should be taken with a desire to accompany him. Only he promised the young earl that he would see Miss Maughan before their departure; and though he did not hope to obtain any direct consent to its objects, would secure that she was thoroughly aware of them, which would probably prepare her mind for a favourable reception of any good results they might be enabled to obtain.

Upon this conclusion the Kerry chieftain passed, with the usual facility of his race and character, from the depths of dejection and despair to the most buoyant hopefulness and gaiety. The offending waiter—who had left him in tears and ready to blow out his brains, according to his own statement, when he brought the soda-water—returning with the broiled chops and crisped parsley, found him frisking about the room, with a face beaming with cheerfulness and vivacity ; and far from receiving a repetition of the snub which had previously dismissed him, was called upon to catch a half-sovereign sent spinning through the air—an operation which he executed as skilfully as Barney O’Flanigan himself could, and as instantaneously on the word. Then Lord Glengariff, who had eaten an excellent dinner with his military friends that day, set to work at quite as good a supper as Mr. Behringbright made, who had scarcely broken his fast for the same period—so medicinal was the hope now poured into his aching wounds.

CHAPTER XXII.

EMILY AND MADELEINE.

MATTERS went on, of course, outwardly, in a much more tranquil fashion in Belhaven Square, during the stormy interval elsewhere passed through by the other personages of the drama, which was rapidly grouping around Madeleine Graham’s central but yet unrecognised protagonism.

Indeed, it is strange to think how many silent tragedies and comedies are in rehearsal behind the brick frontage of the world’s scenery, not only invisible to the passers-by, but often enough to the closest inmates and intimates. How curiously we should all look—we who sit down to dinner daily with one another, hand each other the pepper and salt, and make our remarks on the weather, in perfect confidence and domestic intelligence—if we knew what each other was plotting, thinking—had been doing, perhaps—a few hours or minutes previously.

But, as Horatio remarks, it were to pursue the matter too curiously. What profits it, supposing even we do follow "dead Alexander's clay" from the throne of the East to the stopping of a bunghole? It is best to take the painted trees and rocks and fountains for realities. We lose our relish for the drama very considerably after having been behind the scenes; and, on the whole, it is as well for the heads of families that it generally happens their entire households are in a tacit conspiracy to keep them ignorant and happy.

What puts all this wise commentary into the present writer's head will not, perhaps, be very clear, *apropos* the opening remark of the chapter. Nevertheless, there exists some sequence in the ideas. I am quite sure, for example, that no one besides Miss Madeleine Graham herself, in No. 90 Belhaven Square, knew why, for a considerable time after Mr. Behringbright's abrupt departure therefrom, she sat so puzzled and alarmed, in reverie, endeavouring to account for it; nor why, at the conclusion of a long interval of thoughtfulness, she suddenly woke up to wonder what had become of Emily Maughan—took her bed-candle, and declared she would just go and wish the poor dear girl good-night, and go to bed herself.

"I really *was* tired, and was just thinking of going to bed, mamma, brushing my hair, when Mary Moore came running down to tell me there was a strange gentleman here—that one that had come over with us from England, as you told her to say. I wonder how you managed it in *his* hearing," Madeleine added, taking up her little taper.

"I whispered little Rosa Matilda to tell you, dear, under pretence of bidding Mary Moore bring up some cake," replied the sagacious mother.

"But are you sure he did not observe?" said Madeleine. "Didn't his manner seem changed—not after that, though, but after talking with Emily Maughan? She is a queer girl, mamma, and I always told you so—a regular mischief-maker: and she had that character at school."

This was a great fib of Miss Madeleine. Emily enjoyed a reputation quite the reverse at the Misses Sparx' Finishing Academy, with the single exception of the untruth cir-

culated against her by Mademoiselle Olympe, *in re* Mary Maunders the cook's clandestine party in the kitchen.

"We must try and get rid of her, I suppose, then, if *this thing goes on*," sighed Lady Graham : "only she is so useful, dear, and so good to the children."

Madeleine made no reply, unless the contemptuous twitch of one corner of her mouth was a reply; for she did not consider it necessary to conceal her real character altogether from her own mother. And she proceeded at once to the breakfast-parlour at the end of the passage; whence it did not appear that Miss Maughan had emerged, after her interview with *her cousin*.

Madeleine found her in reality still there, seated in an arm-chair near the window, lost in reflection.

"Are you not going to have any supper, Emily? Mamma was asking, because the supper-tray is just going down," said Madeleine, in the kindest possible tone, and even raising the cold though unresisting hand of Emily to her bosom, where she tenderly pressed it. "How cold you are, dear!—and sitting at the open window!"

"Did not Mr. Brownjohn stay to supper, Madeleine?" said Miss Maughan, gently but determinedly withdrawing her hand, and averting her head towards the garden of the Square.

"No, he would not : you must have said or done something to huff him terribly, Emily! You serve all your *cousins* so, it seems. He went off quite abruptly : and I am sure I don't know whether he accepted mamma's invitation to dinner or not to-morrow. Can you enlighten us?"

"He *will come*, Madeleine!" replied Emily, in tones of resignation, whose calmness was belied by the tremble in the protraction of the sound of the words she gave forth. "You need not doubt but that you have exercised your usual sorcery upon *him* too! But do forbear for this once! Don't make another unhappy dangler-in-vain after you!—You seem to me to delight in such unmeaning cruelty,—but you may play the game too deeply at last!"

"What do you mean, silly dear?" said Madeleine, laughingly. "I am sure I failed utterly with that other

visitor of yours,—the young officer, I think you said he was, though Mr. Brownjohn did not *rank* him at all in the service. And you would have it, you know, that I opened all my batteries upon him also !”

“I will tell you then now, Madeleine, the exact truth about that young gentleman. He *is* an officer, and he is a good deal more besides ;—he is a peer of the realm ! And he has taken a foolish fancy for me, and it was to avoid him that I left Glengariff Castle, and came into your father’s service here.”

“To avoid him !” exclaimed Madeleine—“to avoid a peer of the realm !—But you were quite right, if he only wanted to make a fool of you, as I suppose he did, dear. And now I will let you into a secret, in my turn, Emily,” she continued, with a playfully caustic smile. “I knew all along—or at least the very next day after—who your visitor was, for I saw him out with the officers on the parade, and I took care to inquire. Oh, you sly creature !—but Madeleine Graham is not so easily to be deceived, you see !”

“I thought as much, Madeleine, from the kind of reception you gave him at your next interview ; though you so carefully concealed your knowledge of the real facts of the case,” said Emily, with scarcely suppressed disdain in her accents. “But Lord Glengariff is not the kind of man to make a fool of *any woman*—least of all of me !”

“Well, he is a very unusual kind of man, then. But every thing about *you* is unusual, Emily. You will be telling me next that this last cousin of yours is a prince in disguise !” said Madeleine, breaking into a shower of soft, careless laughter.

“No, Madeleine, no !—I do not say any thing of the kind. He is, of almost all the men that ever I knew, most the man he pretends to be,” said poor Emily.

“Well, then, there is nothing more to be said about *him* ;—except, do you think he will come to dinner to-morrow or not ? He has left it quite ambiguous, I think ; and mamma will not have fish if you imagine he will not come.”

Indifferent as these words seemed, they were full of intense query and inquiry.

"He *will* come, I tell you—he will come!" said Emily, with irrepressible bitterness in her accents. "But for goodness' sake, Madeleine, remember what you are doing! I have warned you repeatedly about this Frenchman, and I have told you as often, if you did not change your conduct, I would—I must—I *ought* to inform your mother!—And now all is going on worse than ever!"

"How do you mean?" said Madeleine, turning very pale.

"Why, this very evening—it is shameful of you, Madeleine, if you mean nothing by him, as you tell me!—this very evening, Mr. Brownjohn himself saw—and wondered at seeing it—the French young gentleman come up from the kitchen, where you must have ordered his admittance. It is wrong of you, very wrong; and I really and truly must tell your mother, unless you assure me that you mean fairly—mean to be the wife of the young man who meets and follows you—us—about in so many places. I can bear it no longer!"

"Mr. Brownjohn, Emily!—You say *Mr. Brownjohn* saw Camille making off?" stammered Madeleine, in accents very different from her usually musical and flowing ones.

"He did so. We both saw it from this place. My kindness is mistaken, I am convinced, Madeleine, not to confess all to your mamma!"

"Oh, stuff,—proper stuff! It is nonsense,—nothing,—merely a flirtation! Besides, that's the way the people go on here that are courting. I will never see him any more;—he came entirely against my will! I wish I had never seen him. He is a detestable nuisance,—a regular French bore! I'll be quit of him! O'Haggarty had no right to let him in; but he can cry like a girl, and quite whimpered her over.—You are sure Mr. Brownjohn will be here to-morrow to dinner? Mamma wants to know—about the fish." Madeleine said all this very disorderly.

"Quite sure?"

"How melancholy-like you speak, Emily; as if it was somebody's execution you were announcing! I must tell

mamma, then. Good-night, dear Emily! I know I may always confide in you, but I really do mean to have nothing more to do with the Frenchman; he bores me; he is a perfect nuisance!—Good-night, dear!”

“And if *Behringbright* comes to-morrow,” concluded Madeleine Graham, in soliloquy, as, after exchanging this affectionate farewell, she left the apartment, “we must make him all right and comfortable about *the Frenchman*,—even if it be at the expense of mademoiselle, who seems to be so much admired by peers in disguise that they cannot afford a civil glance to another lady, quite as good-looking, I should think!”

CHAPTER XXIII.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MADELEINE GRAHAM was not so substantially wedded to truth in her own person that she should have held it impossible a divorce might exist between reality and words with other people; but she placed an absolute reliance on Emily Maughan’s assurances on all occasions, and depended so completely on that poor girl’s “quite sure,” that Lady Graham, acting on the information conveyed, would not only have ordered fish, but a regale in all other respects fit for a Lord Mayor of London, had not Madeleine herself restrained her zeal.

“Why, mamma, what would he think if he saw a dinner like that set out? Wouldn’t he know at once that we had found him out?—and haven’t I told you how he hates to be liked for being so rich—and all that? Do you think I would have hindered you from telling papa, if I had not been certain *he* would spoil every thing, by courting him up at once in the most absurd way? Papa adores money, you know; and he would have been on his hands and knees, in some awkward way or another, before so rich a man, directly they met again. No: he must have just such a dinner as you would be likely to

give to a commercial gentleman who had been civil to one on board a steamer."

"But couldn't we have somebody else invited to account for giving him a good dinner, dear? I should so like to give him a good dinner!—Nothing so soothes the men, and brings them round, as a good dinner," said Lady Graham.

"Well, we might have one or two, in a family sort of way, to give one an opportunity of talking unobserved. There's Professor Doubleday; he likes to hear himself talk, and also to get poor Emily into a corner, and bore her on all kinds of literary and scientific things they both pretend to know about. He's always hungry; so papa has only to hint a dinner for him to come. And perhaps we might have Aunt and Uncle Bucktrout. Uncle would do for the children to pull about after dinner, and I may want Aunt Bucktrout. She'll do any thing she is told, you know, mamma, and has no daughters of her own to marry, and so won't interfere any way unpleasantly."

"Might Uncle Bucktrout bring his bagpipes, do you think, Maddy?"

"What is the use? Papa wouldn't allow him to play them.—But whoever comes, mind, mamma, no grand dinner! Above all things, *no zeal!* as some great minister used always to say to ambassadors when he sent them on their errands."

"What a pity you were not a boy, Madeleine! What an M.P. you would have made! Wouldn't you have forked yourself into a good place before you had been in the Opposition a fortnight?"

"I shouldn't have gone into the Opposition, mamma, at all—most likely—unless I had seen that the others were almost close upon the point of being ousted," said Madeleine Graham; so that one may see, even if she had been a politician, she would have belonged thoroughly to her times.

Madeleine imported the same moderation and sagacity into the style of her own dress and decorations as she thus managed to infuse into her mother's preparations for hospitality. You must not suppose, young lady, that she put

on her very best gown of tea-rose yellow silk, trimmed with black velvet—or decorated her head with her gorgeous party-wreath of jonquils and camellias. She knew better. Decoration in this case would have announced attack—and forewarned is forearmed. Besides, eyes so accustomed to all that wealth could do to embellish beauty were not likely, she thought, to be dazzled into admiration by the means at her command: accordingly, Madeleine adopted the simplest style she could possibly contrive in her attire. She wore a white-muslin gown, delicately spotted with red; no ornament whatever, excepting a real white rose, which hung, with the most delightful artlessness imaginable, in the midst of a flow of splendid black curls, halfway down her snowy neck. It is true that the muslin was exquisitely fine, and almost as transparent as glass; so that it needed remain no secret to any spectator that she possessed the most perfectly-shaped bust in the world, and that her arms were as white and rounded as those of Heré herself—so frequently vaunted by that great poet of antiquity whose birthplace was disputed, at his demise, by seven cities, through all of which he roamed a blind beggar in his lifetime.

If art lies in concealing art, there never was a more successful effort. Emily, who was perfectly natural—that is to say, who dressed herself for the occasion, to the very exhaustion of all her resources in the toilette—looked a great deal more artificial in *her* “properties,” with her black-silk gown, and those richly-sparkling steel ornaments, which she fondly imagined greatly resembled diamonds; and with her golden hair confined in a pretty amber silk network of her own manufacture. But her eyes looked red and swollen, whereas Madeleine’s shone with extraordinary splendour—a circumstance in part due to the kind precaution of her mother, who brought her a nice little drop of whisky and cold water just before dinner, accompanied by a fresh bottle of delicious bay-water, the recipe of which had long been in the family, to wash her mouth clean and sweetscented of the offence.

But, indeed, Madeleine could scarcely have spared the time for a more elaborate toilette. She had felt herself

obliged to spend no small portion of the morning in a kind of taskwork that rather strained her ingenuity, prolific as it was. She had written a letter to Camille Le Tellier, in which, with many protestations of continued devotion and unalterable fidelity, she warned him of the danger of their correspondence being discovered, and of the information she had received, *from a friend*, that he had been observed leaving the house on the previous evening. In consequence she desired him, on pain of offending, and doing her and himself too the greatest injury imaginable, not to come near Belhaven Square for at least another week ; and finally, as a measure of precaution—which could do no harm to nobody—always in future to direct his letters, *pretendedly*, to Emily Maughan. Honor O'Haggarty, who would continue to receive them from him, would faithfully forward them to the person *really meant*. But the contrivance would insure that no great mischief would be done, even if a letter fell, by any disastrous chance, into her papa's hands ; for, of course, he would not concern himself much about a love-affair between a governess in the family and any one out of it, and it would do no harm to Miss Maughan, who need never know any thing at all about the matter.

Madeleine considered this a masterstroke ; but her resources in the epistolary line had yet another demand put upon them, which, after much rumination, she held it not advisable to defer satisfying.

Before departing on her mission to Camille Le Tellier, Honor O'Haggarty entered with a letter for her young mistress, which she had as usual intercepted from the postman—who was induced, for a slight consideration (including an occasional kiss, accompanied or immediately followed by an exhilarating box on the ears), to allow the Abigail an opportunity of transmitting her young lady's correspondence to her, unsubjected to the scrutinising eyes of authority, in the regular passage and distribution to and from the letter-box ; and this letter proved, to Madeleine's great annoyance and perturbation, to be from her friend of other days, Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt.

Nothing could be more unexpected and inopportune.

Madeleine had received several letters from Mademoiselle Loriôt, shortly after her return to Ireland from the Finishing Academy, where their early acquaintance and amity had been cemented. The first, giving her a full account of Camille Le Tellier's antecedents; his real condition in society, his poverty, his mercenary designs upon her, and warning her that he was the *meanest, falsest, and most worthless* of mankind, the least encouragement of whom could only lead to her dear young friend's disgrace and fatal compromising. All the rest, complaining of that dear young friend's total unkind, unfeeling, altogether inexplicable, cruel, barbarous, assassinating—finally, *infamous* silence. And then they ceased, greatly to Madeleine's satisfaction, who persevered, with unshaken firmness, through all the storm of cajolery, entreaty, and oburgation, in her resolution not to be any further hampered and entangled by an alliance with a person who she did not conceive could be of use to her, and might be of detriment. And two years of prolonged recess from any renewed application gave her reason to hope for a much longer one; when, precisely at the very moment when it was most undesirable, Olympe Loriôt again turned up.

This unhappy friend's was a letter that perhaps, in some bosoms not so completely cased in the armour of selfishness, might have awakened a feeling of sympathy and compassion.

It began by declaring that it was written from a sick-bed—the consequence of a detestable, an atrocious outrage, which signalled the efforts of the unfortunate inditer to please an ungrateful and barbarous populace, after experiencing the inhumanity of fate in a thousand ways, in various quarters of Europe: a full recital of which the complainant supported herself with the hope of confiding speedily to her dearest friend, who, she was informed, still continued, to her extreme astonishment, unmarried in her father's house. Ah, how often had the deplorable victim of the injuries of fortune and of the villany of man consoled herself in the midst of overwhelming disasters by the conviction that her beautiful friend must be happy—happy in a splendid alliance, such as her charms ought

readily to have secured! But how was it then not so? Olympe panted to know. And might she not do herself the pleasure and happiness of a brief visit to inquire, as soon as the doctor permitted her to leave the bed to which a nervous crisis, the consequence of that brutal assault, had confined her? Meanwhile, would her dearest Madeleine give her the consolation to know if the most perfidious of men had experienced at her hands, as she (Olympe) hoped and believed, all the scorn and rejection which his mercenary designs and culpable intrigues of every species merited? Did he still live? and did he reside in Belfast?

It was, indeed, a great annoyance to receive this note and queries at this particular juncture. An uncomfortable apprehension of the possibility that Mademoiselle Loriôt might ascertain some of the real facts of the case if she remained in Belfast, with so many motives quickening her natural acuteness and jealousy, struck her. Nor were the means of revenge so completely out of Mademoiselle's power as to render it safe to defy her. It was possible she might even make encounter with Mr. Behring-bright, and be induced to reveal all the real facts of that little bygone conjoint episode to him. A man of so suspicious a disposition would readily take the alarm. Even a continuation of her previous slights might be dangerous. Madeleine's conduct, under this pressure of circumstances, was a real masterpiece of social diplomacy, and might serve as an admirable model and guide to persons whose more exalted department it is to "lie abroad for the good of their country."

She wrote a very short, but a very kind—indeed, almost affectionate—reply to her dear French *instructress of yore*. No, she had not forgotten her excellent preceptress, who had taken so much pains to qualify her for conversation in the French language. The innocent girl declared that she still endeavoured to keep up the accomplishment by occasionally translating one of those "dear old Monsieur Lévizac's exercises," and reading a few pages of the benevolent Fénelon's "Télémaque." But she found it difficult, in consequence of no one hardly speaking French in Belfast. Had Mademoiselle Olympe arrived in that city

merely as a professoress of French, Madeleine continued, in a very grave and demure tone, she should have been delighted to receive her, and do her any good that might be in her power, in the way of recommendation in families. But, unhappily, she herself belonged to a very *serious family*—a family that abhorred plays and playhouses, and every thing relating to them. Consequently, under present circumstances, it was impossible; but in any *other way* in which she might serve her kind former instructress, Miss Graham—so she said—would be most happy. She regretted very greatly, meanwhile, to hear of the accident that seemed to have befallen Mademoiselle Loriôt; but was afraid she must take it as an earnest of the state of public feeling in Belfast, and a warning to her to retire as speedily as possible from that city. As for herself, she had no notion or intention of marriage. She had relinquished all purpose of the kind, and had devoted herself exclusively to looking after her little brothers and sisters, and attending to their education. By the most bizarre fate in the world, Miss Graham felt called upon to confess she had taken a lifelong, an utterly unaccountable, but all-absorbing devotion to the gentleman whom Mademoiselle Loriôt, as she might remember, had once pointed out to her in a theatre in London—whose very name she had herself forgotten, while retaining his image stamped on her heart; a man who was entirely ignorant of her affection for him—who resided in another country—whom she should never see again, but for whose sake she was resolved to live single all the remainder of her days. She did not hope or expect, indeed, that these would be very long—and she was not grieved to think so.

As respected Monsieur Camille Le Tellier, the cautions mademoiselle had been so sincerely friendly as to address to her had been quite useless, inasmuch as, Miss Graham declared, she had all along appreciated the vanity and perfidy of his character. But her parents had, from the very first, put their veto on any possible connection with such a person, who was little better than an adventurer, and looked upon as such in Belfast. And Madeleine professed that her respect for the paternal authority was so absolute

as to render it impossible for her to take any notice of a suitor placed under such a ban ; but she believed that he still occasionally resided, in the service of his employers, in Belfast, from the circumstance that he had now turned his attentions on a young lady who resided as governess in her father's, Sir Orange Graham's, family ; though whether his suit was entertained with much favour in that quarter, Madeleine could not undertake to say : she thought it unlikely, as the young lady—whom mademoiselle must remember, at the Misses Sparx' academy, by the name of Emily Maughan, and to whom family misfortunes had rendered a refuge of the kind, with an old school-fellow, acceptable, had a far more eligible offer. But a man of Monsieur Camille's vanity and externally prepossessing appearance could not be easily persuaded of such a fact, and he certainly haunted about the house, and encountered herself and Miss Maughan abroad on their walks in a very ridiculous and uncomfortable manner ; still, as far as she could discern, without receiving much encouragement, and possibly with a view rather to annoy and insult herself for her rejection than any other motive.

Madeleine concluded her friendly note by congratulating mademoiselle, instead of condoling with her, on being confined for a time to her apartment. The probabilities were, she feelingly observed, that if discovered in the streets of Belfast she would be mobbed there, after the concussion to which she seemed to allude as having taken place at the theatre, between factions so exasperated as religious parties were in that city—especially if the populace were on the opposite side. And she renewed her advice to mademoiselle to leave the town at once, before matters became worse ; generously concluding the whole epistle by assuring her friend and kind preceptress of that dear old time, that had she been possessed of any money, she should have had the greatest pleasure in offering her a share of all she had in the world. But her father (who was far from being so wealthy as was reported) kept his children at a very low ebb, even for pocket-money ; and therefore she could only conclude with her very, very best wishes for Mademoiselle Loriôt's future prosperity and

restoration to health and comforts of every description, since it was quite impossible she could herself have the pleasure of saying so in person.

About the time this despatch was ready for forwarding, Honor O'Haggarty reëntered, with an account of her delivery of the one intrusted to her charge to Camille Le Tellier; but the news she brought did not seem to this good wench of a kind to elicit the expression of satisfaction that visibly shone up in her young lady's countenance as she divulged her tidings. "Mounseer Le Tellier," she said, "had got the letter, sure as life, quite safe and sound, Miss, for he was at home at his lodgings at Widdy Welshe's, ill in bed of a terrible squeegeing he got the night before at the playhouse; where there was the devil's own delight kicked up," so Honor was informed; "all to the account of a foreign Frenchwoman, who would be showing off her nasty airs and antics before people in a Christian country, after having deserted her own throe religion, whatever that was! And there has been the grandest fight over it that ever was, with my Lord Glengariff at the head and tail of it all! And is it at the fight you're smiling so pleasant-like, Miss?"

"He is not much hurt, I daresay, Honor," replied Miss, carelessly; "but he pretends to be such a delicate creature, you might pinch him to death with a pair of sugar-tongs. And he is much better in his bed just at present than worrying and dangling about the house here, now that papa is so particularly suspicious."

A vague dreadful thought, from which she herself shrank with terror—vague as the shapes of Milton's Sin and Death seated at the gates of Hell—crossed Madeleine's mind as she spoke.

"It would be no great harm, perhaps, if he were out of the way altogether!" so rose the thought. "He will be a nuisance to get rid of, in case this affair with Behringbright goes on. But I suppose I shall be able to manage *that*. He already complains of my coldness and slackness of response to his nonsensical outbursts, and must by this time begin to be convinced there is no chance of setting himself up in life, at papa's expense, by marrying

me. However, come the worst, if I can make it Camille's interest to give me up, he will easily agree. And surely, if I marry Mr. Behringbright, I shall have the means!"

Yet this latter thought gave a degree of pain to Madeleine's vanity, which she had herself a notion was a remnant of the vehement passion she once entertained—or fancied she entertained—for the object of her girlish predilection; and brought her reflections to a halt.

"Ah, no; poor fellow, he would not—he could not resign me so easily! But where's the necessity? In almost all the French novels—and every body reads them now, and thinks them so amusing—the wife has a lover too that she greatly prefers to the husband. And the sympathies of the reader are expected to go with her and with the lover. Behringbright is likely, however, to prove a suspicious husband, after his experience, and is quite an Englishman in his stupid ideas, Olympe used to say; so I must only think, I suppose, of enjoying myself with what MONEY can purchase. But that's every thing!—Oh, what will not MONEY buy! Yet have I any real chance of him now? That's the only important question at present. Emily, I'll be sworn, dotes on him, and that is the real secret of her pretended rejection of such a splendid young fellow as Glengariff. If I had a chance of *him*, see if I would give another turn of my eye at that formal old miser I think I may consider I have hooked! Emily always was such a milky fool! And yet she has had sense enough, no doubt, to try and do my trick with him, from his manner last night, and his seeing that donkey sneaking out too!—unless I can do something to turn the tables."

Miss Graham was informed at this juncture, by a message from her mother, that it would be proper for her to be in readiness to receive the visitors; and she descended accordingly to the drawing-room. There she arranged herself on a low stool, seemingly quite unconcernedly, at some crochet-work; taking care, however, to display an exceedingly well-turned ankle and perfect fawn-coloured satin boot in the operation.

CHAPTER XXIV

SOCIAL IAGO-ISMS.

MR. BEHRINGBRIGHT arrived punctually at four o'clock, neither sooner nor later ; dressed as much to the mark as his scanty travelling equipment allowed—resolved in his own mind that he cared nothing about it, but very anxious and doubtful of the kind of reception that awaited him ; doubtful, indeed, of any reception at all, after his abrupt conduct on the previous evening, but with a most notable project in his head, in case he found the opportunity. A project which we cannot say would have done credit to the contriving subtlety of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, when he put his hesitations on the reality of his suspicions to the experiment of a play performed before the guilty parties, closely resembling their own very bad earnest behind the scenes. He would discover the degree and kind of interest Miss Graham might be supposed to take in the mysterious Frenchman, by relating his dangers of the previous evening—in such a manner as to leave his escape doubtful—at some fitting moment, when the young lady might be considered off her guard, and liable to betray whatever emotion she might experience on the sion.

In the first place, however, he was much gratified to observe the beaming cheerfulness and gaiety of Miss Graham's appearance when he arrived. She did not look in the least as if she had recently received any annoying intelligence. Then, though her manner towards him was merely very gracefully polite and friendly, her glance—the glow that lighted up her splendid complexion as she welcomed him, apologising for her mother's unavoidable absence for a few moments—said a wonderful deal more. He was pleased too with her perfect frankness and superiority to all fine-lady affectations.

“Papa has not yet come in from the Linen Hall, and mamma likes to look after things herself, as papa is rather particular about his dinner ; and we have only a common sort of a cook, Mr. Brownjohn, unless one of us superin-

tends. But I daresay you have recovered your appetite, as I have, after the sea-voyage, and will make the best of indifferent fare.—Aunt Bucktrout, this is the gentleman mamma and I told you was so good to us coming over. Professor Doubleday, Mr. Brownjohn—my uncle, Dr. Bucktrout. Your cousin will be in directly, I suppose, Mr. Brownjohn. She is dressing.”

“No, she isn’t dressing, Mad., and you know she isn’t. She’s dressing *the children* for the party, and you wouldn’t!” said a big, surly-looking boy, one of Madeleine’s brothers, and the *enfant terrible* of the family: being an honest ill-behaved sort of a little fellow, who was cherishing a secret determination to run away and turn sailor, as soon as ever he was big enough for a cabin-boy—not feeling very comfortable at home, where he was constantly snubbed for telling the truth; his notions of an outfit for life being that he should take with him, if possible, a box of chessmen belonging to his mother, his uncle’s bagpipes, and a little dog in the neighbourhood called “Dash.”

“What nonsense, Archie! Mamma would not let me, for fear there should be no one ready to receive aunt when she came; and Miss Maughan is so *very* good and kind and forgetful of self in all she does, that she quite undertook to make the children ready of her own accord, nurse being busy in the kitchen,” said Madeleine. And Mr. Behringbright almost bowed at the eulogium, he felt so gratified; not at the praise itself of his *cousin* so much as the generosity and goodness of heart of the beautiful young creature who made the observation.

The usual before-dinner arrangements then ensued. Mr. Behringbright seated himself in a chair which Mrs. Bucktrout insisted he should take, and which was a good deal the nearest to Madeleine; while she expelled Archie, under pretence of bidding him go and tell his mamma that Mr. Brownjohn had arrived—which combined a flattering intimation of the importance of the arrival. She then seated herself between her husband and the professor, on the other side of the fire, bolt upright, and produced a bag containing some kind of work; whereat she also set

herself, as if she was to earn her dinner before she ate it. The professor—a very tall, beetle-browed, high-cheekboned, granite-carved-looking professor—sprang up on his feet upon that, examined the thermometer, and burst into a dissertation on the state of the weather, illustrated from memory by tables of the quantity of rain that had fallen that year in Ireland, from the first of January to the time of speaking. Dr. Bucktrout, a short, round, cod's-head-and-shoulders-looking man, with large, pale, gooseberry eyes, and a general air of resignation,—even as a man who is thoroughly henpecked ought to look,—shuffled his white choker uneasily on his neck, as if expecting a stroke of apoplexy, and gave himself up as a listener.

The only person in the room who appeared thoroughly calm and unembarrassed was Madeleine Graham; and so Mr. Behringbright found her when he made his own first awkward attempts at conversation, under cover of the stunningly-loud dissertation of the professor, who endeavoured by noise, apparently, to secure a more general attention to his meteorological elucidations.

“I hope my cousin—I hope Miss Maughan—is quite well? Dressing the children will amuse her!” was the rather singular opening of his remarks.

“She don't look so, however,—poor dear girl!—Mr. Brownjohn. It almost seems to me, at times, as if Emily was not altogether happy in her mind,—as if something preyed upon her in secret,” replied Madeleine, in a very feeling but mysterious manner, as who should say, She could, an' if she would, reveal!

“Very likely,—nothing is more probable,” said the gentleman addressed, flurried at the calm glance of inquiry that fell upon him, and adding, rather precipitately: “You must excuse the supposition, Miss Graham, but it is likely enough she regrets taking offence so suddenly at Glengariff Castle; and I must confess I am going to do my best to induce her to return thither, and accept a reconciliation with the mother of her favourite pupil there.”

“Indeed! I know mamma will be very sorry to lose Miss Maughan. So shall we all be; but if it is for her

good . . . " and Madeleine again looked with dubious inquiry at the speaker.

"I should hope it may be; though it cannot be for the good of any thing—of any body, Miss Graham—to be removed from your society," said Mr. Behringbright, with most unusual warmth and gallantry on his part.

"It is very kind of you to say so, Mr. Brownjohn, —very gallant indeed! But I do not suppose—although we are very good friends, certainly, and have been since our school-days—that Emily will regret *me* so much. There are other people much more regrettable than I am, I fancy, in Belfast." And with an amiable, conscious-of-secret-meaning smile, the young lady crocheted on.

"What do you mean, Miss Graham?" said Mr. Behringbright, rather startled.

"Is there not that other *cousin* of Miss Maughan, the *serjeant-major* in Lord Glengariff's regiment, who is so very like *his lordship* himself?" said Madeleine, with a playful smile, which nevertheless added to her collocutor's alarm.

"You have seen Lord Glengariff, then, and have ascertained who the foolish young fellow in reality is?" he replied, after a pause; finding himself, as usual, unable to carry on a deception, and anxious to satisfy himself on certain other points, of which this admission was a necessary preliminary.

"Every body has seen and known his lordship in Belfast,—he plays such extraordinary pranks amongst us! But perhaps I may have a more special reason for remarking him, as he laid himself out at one time, I believe, for a flirtation with me,—met me every where I stirred out. But I soon satisfied him I was not to be made ridiculous in that way," Madeleine replied, smilingly.

"I thought so! Glengariff was humming me with his indifference," jealously mused Mr. Behringbright. "But why so, Miss Graham?" he continued aloud. "Did you not think him a very handsome, splendid sort of individual for a flirtation, as you call it? An officer too,—a class of idle gallants with whom such transactions are considered, I believe, strictly legitimate."

"*Handsome!* Mr. Brownjohn? Yes, in the *Irish*

style, I suppose ; but I don't like *that*, though you may think I ought, as I am, in one sense, Irish myself. But papa never will allow that we *are* Irish,—only Scotch people born in Ireland ;—you know what Dean Swift said about people not being horses for being born in a stable ! I don't, however, really at all like the Irish style of good looks. The men look like banditti when they look any thing at all out of the common way. I like people who look quiet and respectable, and as if they were sensible well-behaved people, and paid their taxes regularly. Papa brings us all up in these notions. Mamma is a good deal flightier ; but very few of us take after her. No ; I don't think Lord Glengariff handsome at all. And as for a flirtation with him,—or, indeed, with any one,—I detest the very idea, and think it worse than *unladylike*—thoroughly *unwomanly*—to take any kind of notice whatever of a young man whom one could never expect to marry !”

Mr. Behringbright quite shone up with satisfaction at this loftily-principled statement and depreciation of the Celtic chieftain's rival attractions ; and his satisfaction, doubtless, influenced the warmth of his tone, and the reply itself he gave thereupon.

“ But why, why, Miss Graham, should you think it impossible that a *flirtation* with Lord Glengariff might not have resulted in more permanent relations between you ? He is a man of high birth, it is true, and great possessions ; but beauty levels all distinctions. And your father is, I believe, considered one of the most respectable merchants in Belfast.”

“ Of course, Mr. Brownjohn ; but I belong to the mercantile class, and would rather remain in it than think of thrusting myself into one above me, where I am sure I should not be welcomed. The Glengariffs are renowned for family pride, and that sort of thing ; and the earl's mother, I am convinced, would never admit any one as a daughter-in-law who had not as many quarterings as a German baron. And I have a pride too of my own, which would certainly render——But what are we talking about ? Lord Glengariff never dreams of me in any such light, nor I of him.”

"Well, I believe you are right. From all I hear, Miss Graham, I cannot help concluding he cherishes, in reality, a most sincere, a most passionate regard for my cousin, Emily Maughan," said Mr. Behringbright, pleased to declare so much to the charming object before him.

"Do you think so? But in that case," exclaimed Madeleine, with irrepressible anxiety, "do you mean to say, Mr. Brownjohn, that you purpose inducing her to return to Glengariff Castle, and the society of a young nobleman whose style of good looks, I have reason to think, Miss Maughan would be likelier to appreciate than I am?"

Mr. Behringbright was rather embarrassed at this question. He perceived that he must move a step further in revelation than he had intended.

"Where would be the harm, if the countess can be induced to listen to reason, and consent to her son's happiness, even with a young person of inferior station in life?" he inquired.

"The Countess of Glengariff allow Emily to become the wife of her son! Emily Maughan a *countess*!" exclaimed Madeleine, with an envious throbbing at the heart which almost deprived her of breath. But this was an emotion she had no wish to exhibit too clearly. "Oh, of course," she resumed, with a sweet smile of intelligence, "*you* would like that well enough for your cousin, Mr. Brownjohn; but can you see the least probability? What influence can you possibly possess with the old countess—who is said to be half out of her mind too, at times—to bring about such a result?"

This was rather a poser for the disguised caliph; but he extricated himself not amiss.

"I represent the principal of our firm, the eldest Mr. Behringbright, who was Lord Glengariff's guardian, and has despatched me on this painful business to Ireland, being too much engaged himself, but who, I know, is favourable to the young man's views; and Lord Glengariff himself is to accompany me, to plead his own cause with a mother who idolises him, and who is weakened in her passions by severe illness. I think we shall succeed!"

Again the mysterious pang shot more rendingly through Madeleine's breast. Emily Maughan a countess, married to that splendid young fellow! It was *too much*! She had meant it all along; but Madeleine's instincts of self-preservation were now quickened in what she did by the stings of other vipers awakened in a not unsuitable nest.

"I am sure you *will not* succeed!" she exclaimed, with a vivacity that, if any thing could, might have disturbed the rattle of the professor's scientific mill, from which he was grinding all manner of sublime truisms for the edification of Dr. Bucktrout, who sat listening hopelessly to what was said, knowing that he was there for that very purpose.

Mr. Behringbright both looked and felt much surprised.

"Why not, my dear young lady?" he then remarked, much struck by the positive tone of the statement.

"If even you succeed with the countess, you will fail in the main result. I have my reasons for thinking so," replied Madeleine, with affected evasion. "Do not ask me at present. Emily is the best and noblest woman in all creation,—the most truly and completely a *woman* in her affections of all I ever knew; and *no* true woman, I am sure, would marry an emperor if she did not prefer him to all mankind!"

"All true women seem to — *must* resemble each other on that point," said Mr. Behringbright, delighted at the effusion, and thinking to himself, "These are almost Emily's words, as well as sentiments!"—which was not unlikely, as Madeleine had plagiarised them directly from her. But he grew a little confused on reflection, and added, in a rather discomposed manner, "Do you suppose, then, that Emily prefers somebody else? And if so, who can it be?"

"I am sure—quite sure—of the former point. But I do not know that even your near relationship justifies me in communicating my surmises on the latter point,—for they are nothing more," replied Madeleine, appearing to consider she had said too much, and as if abandoning the discussion.

"You do not mean—?" began Mr. Behringbright, interrupting himself with a deep flush, which did not escape the young lady's notice, although she seemed busy at the moment in taking up a dropped loop in her work. "*Who* can the person possibly be?" he then exclaimed, with a still guiltier shrinking and precipitation.

"If I tell you, will you promise most faithfully never to mention it to Emily, unless she reveals it herself? For, after all, I may be mistaken; she has made no confidante of me," said Madeleine.

"I do most solemnly! But assuredly, you are mistaken if you imagine—" began Mr. Behringbright; and he again paused, while Madeleine resumed, with perfect coolness and imperturbability:

"It is a young Frenchman, I imagine,—a commercial agent, who used to haunt about her in England, when she was at school at the Misses Sparx' with me, and who does so still here in Belfast, though you must not let papa or mamma have the least inkling of it. I promised her no one should; though I am sorry to say she encourages him so much, and he is such an impudent fellow, it is quite an annoyance to me to see how things go on. But he *is* very handsome—in the Gallic style, which I dislike as much as the Celtic; and I suppose, as he travels all over Ireland, he has found means to keep up an acquaintance and correspondence with Emily in Kerry."

Very few people have ever been more surprised in a drawing-room before dinner than Mr. Behringbright, as he listened to these words.

As a general fact, I do not myself put much faith in the conventional artistic theories of expression; but George Cocker certainly now opened his mouth and stared with his eyes almost exactly like the plate of "Astonishment" in Sir Charles Bell's "*Anatomy applied to the Fine Arts.*" In other respects it was a moral let-down, almost exactly resembling a descent of the sack of a fire-escape, when one arrives with a bump to the ground. He was quite bewildered for a moment. "*A Frenchman! She prefers a French commercial traveller!*"

All of a sudden, astonishment and discomfiture yielded

to another expression in Mr. Behringbright's countenance—one of resolute determination and curiosity. He felt he had courage now to essay his grand touchstone. "What!" he exclaimed, "can you possibly mean the young Frenchman who was *nearly killed* last night in the play riot, and who, I understand, is called *Camille Le Tellier*?"

But what a foil was there! Madeleine looked at him with a look in which it was impossible, indeed, to detect the slightest degree of tender concern.

"*Nearly killed!* How was that? I was going to say—only it would be so unchristian—it's a pity he was not *quite* killed; for I am sure he is not worthy of Emily Maughan!" were her words.

Quite satisfied by this carelessness, Mr. Behringbright fell to, and related the whole adventure of the previous night at the Belfast theatre; at the conclusion allowing it to be perceived that, after all, Monsieur Le Tellier had not come to any great grief.

"What a pity! But I thought not!" mused Madeleine, when she heard this,—not much wondering within herself, in sooth, that Camille had figured as the principal assailant of his once-beloved Olympe; for she had herself taken care to favour him with a perusal of that lady's revelations concerning him, at a time when Le Tellier had taken to the fantastic expedient of representing himself to her as an enamoured prince in disguise, by way of urging a plan of elopement.

"What a mercy you interfered, sir!"—but she concluded aloud—"for I suppose Lord Glengariff has caught a notion that he has a rival there; and as he is thought half mad too, he might have really murdered the horrid unmanly fellow."

"So he might," said Mr. Behringbright, who perceived an explanation of a great many mysteries in this new light thrown on the affair. "We must take care not to mention the matter before Emily, now it is all over; but I see more than ever the necessity of inducing Lord Glengariff to return to Kerry, to get him out of the way of mischief; yet what you say, Miss Graham, entirely dispirits me for the effort I intended to make to overcome his mother's

scruples. Emily herself, indeed, assured me last night she would never marry his lordship, and declared the most disinterested and generous feelings on the subject, which I ought to have understood better. Thank you, Miss Graham!—Thank you for this new and most relieving light you have thrown on the affair! I am only sorry for poor Glengariff; but it will be better for him, perhaps, too in the end.”

“You must renew to me your promise not to mention the subject to Emily, unless she alludes to it first herself. It would look so unhandsome, so prying of me, and perhaps I may be mistaken after all.”

“No; you are not at all mistaken, I am convinced, Miss Graham! Believe me, you send me with a much lightened heart into Kerry. Yet, after all, a doll of a Frenchman like that might easily be superseded in a woman's affections. Don't you think so?”

“Unless she were a doll herself—by a REAL MAN!” replied Madeleine, with a glance at Mr. Behringbright that beamed as a flash of lightning in a haystack, setting every thing on fire within. Heaven knows what he was not about to say, if Madeleine, satisfied with the effect produced, had not added, sedately, resuming her work: “How curious it is you are going into Kerry too, Mr. Brownjohn! I shall soon be there myself, I believe. That's the county where Killarney is situated, is it not? And Aunt Bucktrout has insisted on the doctor taking her and me on an excursion there this summer, and he is so fond of fishing, he has quite agreed. But I suppose *you* will be gone before we get there?—and, any way, Glengariff is a long way off the lakes, is it not, among the mountains?”

“It partly overlooks them; and I had a notion myself of spending a little time at Killarney this year. I shall be sure to be there when you arrive, if it is at all in the season, Miss Graham!” returned the bedazzled merchant.

“I think we shall set off in a few days. Dr. Bucktrout is only waiting till a patient of his dies, who can't be left; and it is expected every day,” replied Madeleine,

with an extremely satisfied internal smile : adding to herself, "Pretty strong, considering uncle hasn't had a patient these five years, and both he and aunt would starve if papa did not employ him to buy up the linen from the poor people that weave it every where about us in the country !"

Well might that prince of *persifleurs* and literary coxcombs who persisted in signing himself Horace Walpole after he was Earl of Orford, from a habit he had contracted in seventy-five years, but who was sometimes as profound an observer, reader, as either you or I,—well might he make the remark :—"Acute and sensible people are often the most easily deceived ; a deceit of which it may be said, 'It's impossible for any one to dare it,' always succeeds."

CHAPTER XXV

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

PEOPLE fall in love under very various conditions—under very strange and improbable ones occasionally in romances and novels, which do not observe that strict adherence to nature enforced upon us manufacturers of the same by our sapient critics, who on their own part behave mostly like that Athenian audience which hissed the genuine squeaking of the pig, as inferior to the imitative faculty of a favourite mimic of the theatre. When we *are* natural—when we give them actuality itself—they turn down their thumbs ! What will be said when, for example, I feel myself compelled, by the inevitable truth of things, to declare that Mr. Behringbright made his grand plunge souse over ears into love at—*dinner*? the most unromantic meal possibly of all the four !

But so it was. I have all Killarney before me, abounding in scenes far fitter for the occasion ; legend-haunted mountains, fairy-tripped woodland and glade, solitary lake and tarn, brooded over by the very spirit of imaginative poesy and sentiment. Sweet Innisfallen itself lies there,

rimmed by the silver wave ! The hero of the experience is going to Killarney, and so, by a forced march, is the heroine, under the respectable convoy of an aunt and an uncle who, until late that evening, did not know that they had wished to take her thither immediately on a delightful excursion ; and yet *magna est veritas* indeed, when truth forces a romancer, with such advantages at disposal, to admit that his hero fell in love at dinner in a commercial city ! But we can no more choose the time and places of our falling in love than we can of our other grand debt to nature. The inevitable moment comes when and where it pleases, and it is all up with us then and thereupon ; and we go about thenceforth with a new soul within us, or take our measure of the earth with none at all, according as the case may be.

If it is any apology for Mr. Behringbright, I would, however, remark that the dinner was a remarkably good one ; Lady Graham had not made herself the colour of the kitchen-fire she came from for nothing. Fresher and finer salmon cutlets were never served : had they leaped from the Falls of Ballyshannon into the frying-pan, they could not have been creamier and juicier to the taste, or pinkier to the eye. The fore-quarter of lamb was first-rate —browned so delicately, “you would have thought,” in the pathetic words of Dr. Bucktrout, who was a gourmand of the first water, “its own mother had done it.” The ducks were as good ; and of the marrowfat green peas I will say nothing, lest I set the reader’s lips a-watering. As to the pies and puddings and Swiss creams and jellies that ensued, only a Muse, specially hired for the occasion, could do justice to the variety and excellence of those that loaded the board in due succession after the most substantial viands ; the whole being seasoned with an agreeable mixture of cold punch, first-rate claret (which at that time was certainly obliged to be smuggled, so cheap as Sir Orange got it), bottled stout, and whisky, all culminating into a superb port at the cheese and radishes. No champagne : Madeleine had strictly forbidden that, for fear of awakening suspicion in the guest. And although the whole dinner was so nice, the reader will be pleased

to remark that there was nothing served at it but what might well have figured on the table of a substantial citizen on an ordinary festive occasion. Sir Orange himself had not the faintest idea that he had a millionaire in his eye when he so earnestly recommended him to take another toss of the mountain dew, on Dr. Bucktrout's authority, who pronounced it an infallible cure for the roast-duck seasoning.

This Dr. Bucktrout was a curious sort of a little fellow, with the head and shoulders of a good big one, and all the rest of him very short and inadequate indeed—a circumstance which had, perhaps, something to do with the anomalies of his character and career; for he was a man who had spent his life, and a considerable fortune, in all kinds of great projects, and failures in carrying them out, which had finally reduced him to the condition of a hanger-on and dependent of his morose and purseproud brother-in-law. He was by nature, also, a most jovial-hearted, lively-spirited creature, abounding in fun and frolic; and yet he had married Sir Orange's veritable sister, when she had long passed the desperation of—what age is an old maid desperate at?—who was the very antipodes of mirth and wit. And yet he sat thankfully at that hard ungenial board, very seldom daring to be facetious in word or deed; despising himself for being the Lazarus of such a Dives, but too lazy, too careless,—too hopeless, perchance,—to make the slightest manly effort to raise himself from the position. He fished whenever he could; played the bagpipes on the sly in the garret of his own house; and kept canaries in any number, under pretence of exporting them for sale; contracted all the debts he could, and never paid any he could avoid: and that was Dr. Bucktrout's way of passing through time to eternity. "It all comes to the same thing in the end," he would say; and indeed the observation of the stateliest monuments, as well as of the lowliest churchyard mounds, seems to confirm the aphorism.

Professor Doubleday was simply a bore of the first magnitude; for surely no bore equals the bore scientific. He knew every thing; but, not satisfied with that, he in-

sisted that every body else should too from his lips. You could hardly mention any thing upon which he could not give you a lecture; and he applied the synthetical method of reasoning even to his style of eating a custard. He would swallow the pudding whole, and then weary all within hearing by his efforts at ascertaining the component parts. To be sure, Lady Graham was mostly willing enough to oblige him in these respects.

Mr. Behringbright, however, lent very little, if any, attention to the professor. So undesignedly was every thing conducted, that at dinner he was seated opposite Miss Graham, instead of beside her; but it must be confessed that he was thus furnished with an excellent point of view to contemplate the beauty and artless fascinations of manner of that bright young creature—the grace, the sprightliness, the unwearied good-nature and attentiveness of her behaviour to all her father's guests. Nothing very special *at* him, excepting an occasional glance, full of interest and inquiry; the kindest, but at the same time most unobtrusive attention to his wants; the most smiling, wittily-appreciating of rewarding looks whenever he said any thing rather good, or which he thought so: and Mr. Behringbright decidedly laid himself out to shine conversationally that day.

As for Emily Maughan, she was really so much and so generally overlooked on that occasion, that I, who appreciate to the full the loveliness of the sincerity and purity of heart and feeling that marked her character, find I have fallen into a similar error of judgment: and although she was placed next to the principal guest, I have omitted to mention the fact hitherto. How comes it that these sweet and benignant natures, which are the salt and redemption of society and the world, and preserve both from corruption and stinking altogether in the nostrils of heaven—how comes it they cut so unimportant a figure mostly to the eye? But the daylight does not dazzle like the flash and glare of an artificial illumination; and the quiet, modest, retiring loveliness of Emily Maughan faded into insipidity, in contrast with the sparkle and glow of those guiltily-enkindled and impassioned charms of her

rival. After the first civilities of recognition and inquiry, Mr. Behringbright scarcely noticed she was by his side all the rest of the repast. He was even rude in his neglect, had he been conscious of it; but his whole attention was caught and enthralled in the invisible network of the skilful sorceress his *vis-à-vis*. I cannot even take it upon my credit to affirm that the abusive and distorting lights which Madeleine had cast upon her luckless schoolfellow's whole character and demeanour had much effect in producing this state of absorption in another, under which Mr. Behringbright had passed: he seemed to himself oblivious of all but the exquisite delight and attraction of the object before him. Yet I fancy too that Mr. Behringbright's feelings of sentimental interest and concern in Emily Maughan's very visible depression of spirits and manner must have been seriously modified by his present conviction, that they were owing to a secretly-cherished passion and preference, not for himself, but for a penniless French adventurer. Perhaps his own honest moral nature shrank with a kind of antipathy from a woman so young and yet so deceptive in some matters, and who, with an unintelligible grandeur of feeling as regarded the man she did not love, could so unhandsomely endeavour to cast the blame of her own perversity and folly, to say no worse of it, as regarded another, upon the faithful female friend who deserved so much better at her hands.

In short, this dinner, according to previous reluctant admission, completed the enthrallment of George Cocker Behringbright, who, long before it was over, had grown to regret most profoundly the circumstance that he had faithfully promised Lord Glengariff to meet him at the railway-station for the South, in time to start by the evening mail-train; but he knew that his lordship would not forget the circumstance, and he felt that the supposed discovery he had made respecting Emily and her preferred French suitor rendered it more than ever advisable to remove the young man from Belfast to other care and influences. At a distance—should the necessity arise—it might be possible to break the truth to him, without ap-

prehension of any immediate tragical results to the frenzy of jealousy and wrath certain to be provoked. But any body might have seen the sincerity of the extreme regret with which, looking at his watch, he announced the necessity of his departure in time for that unhappy train; a necessity in which Sir Orange Graham at once acquiesced, as might be expected from one man of business to the other, but which his fair daughter deprecated with so enchanting an expression of regret in the tremulous vibration of her tones, that Mr. Behringbright felt almost tempted to defy whatever might ensue, and remain. I think, indeed, he would have remained, had he not made certain that that extremely handsome young earl and officer would assuredly take the opportunity of inquiring him out, and making one of the party; and had not Madeleine assured him, in her ingenuous, careless way, that his lordship (and nothing could be more probable) had already tried to get up a "flirtation" with her!—to console himself, no doubt, for that strange Emily's repulse.

He persisted, therefore, in the necessity of leaving this delightful *r  union*, repeating his expressions of regret with eyes that directed them all to Madeleine Graham, and with a fervour which least of all escaped the observation of poor Emily Maughan. She did not exhibit her emotion, however, in any unbecoming way; did not burst out crying, or otherwise give vent to the choking sensation that swelled up in her heart, when Mr. Behringbright turned to her, and calmly stated that he was going to Glengariff Castle, and, if the causes of disagreement there could be removed—as he hoped they might be—trusted she would not refuse what would then become the *unanimous wish* of her friends for her to return thither. Nay, she found means to reply, with only the slightest imaginable faltering of tone, that she was very happy where she was, and was convinced that nothing could be effected to induce her to wish to return to Glengariff; but hoped that the young lord there—with whom she had the quarrel.

And although she became suddenly silent at this point, nobody but Madeleine Graham—who had sweetly and affectionately approached her in the adieux, and put her

arm in a most sisterly manner round her waist—distinguished at all plainly the sob that choked her utterance; stifled in its turn by the potent effort of will of which women are capable in such cases.

“Lord Glengariff is going with me, and will be one of the most earnest suitors with his mother to remove all causes of disagreement,” Mr. Behringbright replied, with a significance that made Emily—not blush with maiden consciousness, nor flush with ambitious hope, but—turn of a deadly pallor. Nor did that hue of despair and suppressed vehemence of emotion at all revive—rather the contrary, if possible—when the same gentleman exclaimed, in tones fervid with earnestness: “But I may look forward to seeing *you*, Miss Graham, in a few days again?—amidst that beautiful scenery, which will be a fitting setting for charms—I mean, which you say you are about to visit with your uncle and aunt!”

“I hope so—yes, most certainly,” was the cordial reply. And the uncle and aunt looked very much surprised, and the uncle pleased; for he knew there was good fishing at the lakes, and that Madeleine pretty well ruled the house—ruling her mother, who ruled Sir Orange; which latter nevertheless on this occasion scowled angrily at his wife, to know why she had made this arrangement without his sanction:—Lady Graham, confident that her daughter had a meaning in it, answering the scowl with a nod of affirmative defiance,—

“Yes, most certainly!” and it became from that moment as decided a matter as it announced itself.

In another fifteen minutes, Mr. Behringbright, pelting up to the station at a headlong cab-speed, found himself seated side by side with Lord Glengariff, in a first-class carriage, answering his lordship’s outpour of questions as to how *Emily Maughan* looked, what she said, and did, and thought on the subject of their journey into Kerry, quite at random; himself remembering, cogitating, considering of importance nothing but the last beaming glance of those wonderful, reciprocating, recalling eyes of Madeleine Graham, as he pressed her hand—for the third time, in leaving her father’s house on the journey—in his own!

CHAPTER XVI.

KILLARNEY.

ALL kinds of fine writing, it is notorious, have been for some considerable period out of fashion in the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland—not, possibly, excepting the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Also, myself, I have some private reason (for I too, who make, read novels, unlike the quack and the boluses) to opine that the very finest of landscape-painting in words seldom answers any other purpose, in a work of the kind, than to facilitate the courteous reader's advance, by the operation called *skipping* among the fair, who are worst of all addicted to it. Else I should have much pleasure in inflicting on my own a full description of the far-famed Lakes of Killarney; partly from memory, but chiefly from the guide-books, as accuracy is a thing to be studied in topography.

This is, in fact, my only reason for not attempting to *describe the indescribable*; to transfer to the hard medium of words the soft magic of a scene which the fairy colours of a Turner could scarcely shed upon the canvas in *one* of its ever-varying shiftings of light and shade, that make an endlessly-changing panorama of what in less fancifully cloud-haunted regions would be the immovable forms of mountain and rock and shore. Least of all should I like to undertake the task on such an occasion as that on which my Lord Glengariff and his equally passion-dazed mentor arrived on the scene, for it was then in one of its most melting moods of sunshine and mist;—resembling nothing so much as a beautiful woman yielding to some resistless, voluptuous charm,—glowing with passion and dissolving in tears of remorseful delight, and passing through a myriad hues of contending emotion, until—as at the moment they descended in the little town from the railway-carriage—the whole exquisite spectacle attained an unrivalled moment of loveliness under a burst of sunbeam and rain over the Toomies Mountain, and then—— But I

started with the understanding that I was not to attempt the description of the indescribable.

I don't mind being a little more particular in localities. Though, for aught either the reader or myself needs know or care, this Castle of Glengariff, whither we are going, may be as little a solid existency as any of those numerous towering creations of similar pretension, which most of us take a delight in erecting and handsomely furnishing, at the expense of futurity, *in the air*. And even I admit that I do not think it probable Glengariff Castle will be found by the curious explorer precisely on the spot where it suits me at the moment, for the convenience of my story, to place it. But he or she must be content to impute the disappearance or transposition of so massive an erection to a vagary of the fantastic cloud-magician of the place, who does far greater wonders than that occasionally—at times transferring even the dark purple outline of a mountain from one side of a lake to another!

Glengariff Castle, then, stood piled on the summit of some massive crags of the Toomies Mountain, on the Lower Lake of Killarney, nearly opposite the town of the name, and immediately above the romantic O'Sullivan's water-glen and cascade. About four miles' breadth of limpid blue wave separated it from my Lord Kenmare's demesne, which at all events is a solid reality, and may easily be found both in the maps and the actual locality. It was not a very large castle, having been erected originally by the O'Donoghues, when they were kings of Kerry, and reigned, I presume, in the capital town of Tralee, as a sort of outlying stronghold, to maintain their claims to the supremacy of the lake portion of their dominions. And in the fourteenth century, when the chiefs of the family, shrunk from their royal pretensions, fixed their quarters on the spot, they were restrained from making any very formidable additions to the strength and greatness of their residence by the unkind interference of the Saxon Lord-Presidents of Munster, who found that Irish fortresses did not conduce to the serenity and well-ordering of their charge. Moreover, Cromwell, as was said—though it was

General Ludlow, in point of exact fact—amused himself and a little army for several days in battering the castle down about the ears of my Lord Muskerry and a band of determined cavaliers, who made the last stand of their faction there, in Ireland, against the Parliament;—the result being, that little more than an old tower, or central donjon-keep, remained of the ancient building. And the other ruins had been patched up and repaired in brick and mortar into a modern residence, which it did not gratify the eye of the admirer of the romantic and picturesque to descry from any point of view, but composed on the whole a very comfortable abode for the first of the O'Donoghues who showed a taste for the sort of thing;—which was our Ferdinand, Lord Glengariff's, granduncle. A sensible but most unusual sort of man in the race this was, who represented his native county so effectually in the Irish Parliament, during the Walpole Administration, that he recovered a very considerable portion of the forfeited family property, and was even so degenerate in another respect as to accept a British earldom, and sink his proper august chieftain's title of THE O'Donoghue of the Lakes.

Arriving in Killarney town about the hour of sunset, our travellers put up at the Rose and Shamrock Hotel, where it was determined that Lord Glengariff should remain while Mr. Behringbright crossed the lake to the castle to ascertain the position of affairs there. This the latter judged best for several reasons—one only of which he communicated to his young companion. Lord Glengariff's mother's health, he said, was in so dubious a state, and the communication he had last received from her betokened such a high state of nervous excitement, that any sudden shock, even of joy, might be dangerous to her. He would therefore break the return of her son to her in a cautious manner, and signify that all was right, and that he might cross to her embrace, by directing the Glengariff flag to be displayed, as was usual when the lords of the castle were at home, as soon as he had arranged every thing to his satisfaction.

In reality, Mr. Behringbright was considerably puzzled

as to what he himself intended to say or do in the conjuncture.

He had promised Lord Glengariff to interpose in favour of his longed-for union with Emily Maughan, and on those terms only had gained his consent to return. On the other hand, the information he had received, on the subject of that young lady's romantic preference for a penniless French adventurer, not only made the project in itself more unfeasible than ever, but wrong and insulting towards the noble family involved, to be further entertained.

The only refuge in his perplexity for Mr. Behringbright lay in his thorough conviction of the impossibility of obtaining any kind of countenance for such a misalliance from Lady Glengariff; whence he argued to himself that he might fulfil his engagement to the young lover without much fear of any ill consequences. Still it was an unpleasantly doubtful moral position for a man of Mr. Behringbright's plain honesty of purpose and action in most cases. Undeniably, however, it was a relief to get out of his lordship's company for an interval; for perhaps it was a mistake a while ago in the present writer to declare the bore scientific the greatest of bores. The *lover bore* certainly beats all!—and to be condemned to one for any length of time is in reality to be consigned to the Norfolk Island of social penal settlements! They say that to the eye every thing there blooms paradise, as the charms and perfections of a mistress do in the enchanted recitations of the enamoured individual. But to the convicts who drag the chain and lift the oar,—that is to say, the listeners,—the beauties of the landscape must often escape observation in the tediousness and monotony of a constant contemplation of what can be supposed to be interesting to them only in the enjoyment of others.

Mr. Behringbright might thus reasonably have grown tired of the very name of Emily Maughan, and exhausted with the detail of her goodness, kindness, and loveliness, from the mere tediousness of the iteration. But, moreover, his own mind was almost entirely engrossed with another and, in his opinion, infinitely more engaging and

seductive vision ; and it was a real annoyance to him to be forced continually out of his own reveries to respond to raptures and enthusiasm in which he took so little share. He was obliged, in self-defence, at least to pretend to be asleep two or three hours at a time, but it was irksome to have to keep his eyes shut so long without being so in reality. The only thing that rendered the rhapsody at all endurable was the confidence it excited that the Irish Leander was irretrievably plunged in love in a direction removed from so otherwise irresistible a light of loveliness as Miss Madeleine Graham.

Behold now the maturer lover embarked in one of the small wherries always on hire on the beach below Killarney, wrapped in his plaid against the chill of the evening breeze on the lake, and confiding himself and his fortunes to the zealous rowing of Darby O'Finn, the boatman, and his handsome half water-nymph, half bewitching Munster peasant-girl daughter, Ellen—better known to tourists by the name of “Kate Kearney,” conferred upon her by one of their number, who remembered the song, and thought it appropriate.

Seating himself with his daughter at their oars, he inquired of the passenger whether his honour wanted to row to The O'Donoghue's Jellars (meaning some irregular rocks on the passage to the Middle Lake), as there would be something to offer to strangers there, no doubt, since it was reported in the country that the great O'Donoghue “his own self” had been rising on his silver-hoofed war-horse from the lake—so must be at home ; “and the family was always looked on for a welcome to strangers, from the ould, ould time of all, unless they came on the fighting lift, when of course they resaved the blessing they stamped on the threshold !”

Mr. Behringbright told him, with stern precision, to row to *Glengariff Castle* ; and suffered no attempt to renew a gossip until they had passed right out into the middle of the water, when he bethought himself of inquiring after Lady Glengariff, of a person who was so likely to know all the news of the lake and its surrounding habitations.

“Is it THE PRINCESS your honour is after maning?”

returned Darby, giving the Saxon-made countess her proper title as a descendant of the "ould kings" among the Munster peasantry, with due inflation—perhaps a little *indignified* personally at the cold reception of his previous pleasantry.

"If you like to call her so; but you know whom I mean by Lady Glengariff, I presume?"

"That is herself, sure and safe—the same we are both talking about, your honour. Well, then, your honour may draw your own references how she is when I tell you it's the princess that has seen THE VISION quite lately, and put me on the talk of saying that The O'Donoghue is at home, and his cellars reeking up *white punch* for visitors past them, any hour of the day."

Aware of the current superstitions of the district, Mr. Behringbright observed, with alarm, "Her ladyship is very ill, then, I imagine from the nonsensical statement you make?"

"She's not had a worse fit on, I'll be bondsman, sir, since the day she threw the first young heir—the present O'Donoghue's elder brother—from the castle-windows into the lake," replied Darby, "more by token that it was me-self fished up the poor little body, gnawed, as if the rats had been at it, by the fishes, three days after, as far down away as Cromaglen Base."

"Do not mention the sad story," said Mr. Behringbright, with a shudder. "The unfortunate lady is indeed subject to very violent paroxysms of insanity, but no true friend of the family would be fond of retailing such deplorable anecdotes of it.

"Sure, but there was no secret made about it when there was obliged to be a crowner, and twelve best men of the lakes to sit on the body, and her ladyship screaming all the while up and down the castle, till we on the lakes here might have thought it was the ould eagles come back again to claim their nests on the Middle Lake crags, after fifty years' absence and more. And when it is well known that The O'Donoghue then and there left her ladyship to live a lone married widdy by herself, out of grief and despair for the loss of his first-born, and for

fear, said he, there should be more mad critturs born to murder himself or their mother, turn-about," Darby replied, with great warmth, evidently vexed at being thought to lack concern for the good report of the chieftains of his native wilds. "But," he continued, in a lower and more mysterious tone, "this is not what your honour calls a violent *procyism*. The princess was never held before as they say she is now, for she has gone off into a *mute melonkully*, they say, now, and sits for hours and days and weeks, until she tumbles senseless asleep on the floor, without saying a word to any body or thing, sleeping or waking. And this all on account, I have heard, of my young lord's—as your honour calls him—having run away from her fierce tempers and behaviours as far north as he can get, almost into Lough Neagh, and threatening never to come home again, as his father wouldn't before him."

Mr. Behringbright's alarm was increased by this intelligence, which he thought was likely to be well founded. But, as his custom was, he gave little or no external sign of emotion. Meanwhile the boat, assisted by a lively breeze in the single ragged sail, flew rapidly over the water, and arrived soon after at a little pier contrived for the convenience of the inmates of the castle, immediately under the crags forming its base; thence a gradually winding path through a thick tufting of arbutus wood led up to the mansion and its grounds, which were backed by the Toomies Mountain and its ravines, clothed in dense forests almost to the misty summits of the still loftier chain of Dunloe.

Here Mr. Behringbright dismissed his Charon and fairer roweress, and, flinging his knapsack over his shoulders, mounted the steep but not unfamiliar way to Glengariff Castle. Not in very agreeable reverie, and with a degree of doleful anticipation of what awaited him at his journey's end, which he never remembered before to have experienced, though his associations with the spot were none of them remarkably pleasing. In fact, his first acquaintance with the name and race inhabiting it had been of a disastrous character. It began with the late earl rescuing him, at some considerable personal risk, from a crevasse in the

Alps, down which he had accidentally slipped on a pedestrian excursion he had made in the then solitary and unfrequented regions round Mont Blanc. And though they were of very different character and pursuits—Lord Glengariff plunging into every imaginable gaiety and debauchery, to escape from the recollection of the then recent tragical event in his family—the circumstance that Mr. Behringbright was at the time brooding over his own conjugal calamities, and a natural feeling of gratitude, had cemented a friendship between them, of which the present visit to Glengariff Castle was no slight token and consequence.

Arrived at the residence, where he was very well known to the principal domestics, Mr. Behringbright found himself received with great satisfaction and relief by the house-steward, Mr. Molloy, but from whom he received a still more distressing account of Lady Glengariff's state than even from the Killarney boatman. Her ladyship, he said, had seen **THE VISION** immediately on the departure of their young lord, after his unhappy discussion with his mother; and nothing would persuade her to the contrary but that the fiat of doom had gone forth, and that the last heir of The O'Donoghues was destined very shortly to perish;—probably at a distance from her, in some disgraceful brawl, leading the wild life he did at Belfast, which was in all the papers, the steward added, with tears in his eyes, though he believed her ladyship never read them. But it was known, he concluded, with a sigh that sounded like a pair of blacksmith's bellows—for Molloy was a very big fellow—that the gift of the *second-sight* was in the family, and her ladyship no doubt had her own reasons for believing as she did!

Mr. Behringbright formed an opinion more in the style of the nineteenth century from all this, that Lady Glengariff's violent outbreak had subsided into a more than usually profound lapse of grief and dejection, not unlikely to end in a settled form of that worst of all kinds of madness—the melancholy and moping. Hoping, however, that his good news would produce a salutary effect, he desired his arrival should be announced, and shortly after had the satisfaction to learn, from the countess's favourite

attendant—one might almost say keeperess—Nora Macnab, that her ladyship seemed considerably roused by the intelligence, and had consented to allow herself, for the first time for several days, to be dressed to see him.

Mr. Behringbright took this for a good sign of revived hope and intelligence on her ladyship's part, as he had refrained from having it mentioned that he had news to communicate concerning her son, fearing the effect of any sudden intelligence. He therefore supposed that Lady Glengariff imagined he had come direct to Killarney in consequence of her letter, and that she was disposed to enter into some rational plan of proceeding to bring the wanderer back.

Still he was not prepared for the extraordinary reality of the case.

He found Lady Glengariff attired in deep widow's mourning, which she had worn ever since the death of her husband, though he had long previously forsworn her society as a wife, and rioted away existence remote from her in distant foreign lands. She was a woman of a very lofty and noble person, with evident remains of great former beauty. But her wasted countenance, her prematurely grizzled hair, the hopelessly anguished expression of her large black eyes, revealed the ravages of her fearful mental disease; otherwise, neither Mr. Behringbright nor the most skilful physician could have detected what was at work within at this lucid interval, or have believed that at so very recent a period Lady Glengariff had exhibited all the signs of the worst species of *furious homicidal mania*.

"This is kind of you, *Baron*," she said, addressing Mr. Behringbright by a title which he had entirely dropped since his divorce case, and had never heartily affected. "But when were you otherwise? And you have arrived at the very moment I could most have wished it! I have been considering for a long time, I fancy, what ought to be done in this case, and I only waited for your arrival to confirm me—as I am almost certain you will—in the view I am now disposed to take in the affair of my son and Miss Emily Maughan. I have

not yielded without a struggle, you may believe; but I have come to the conclusion that nothing can save Glengariff from the frightful malady of his race—nothing can preserve it from destruction—but permitting him to follow his own inclination, and marry this poor girl, whom, I confess, at the same time, I have always known and considered to be the most amiable and deserving young creature of her sex it ever pleased God, in His inscrutable wisdom, to send into this miserable world?"

Instead of being delighted with this sudden and apparently happy solution of the whole entangled difficulty, Mr. Behringbright was fairly thunderstruck. How could he help being so, indeed, knowing what he believed he knew concerning Emily Maughan and her Frenchman?

He did, in consequence, as most people do who don't know what to do—he did nothing. He only looked at Lady Glengariff in silent amaze and bewilderment.

This was evidently what she had not expected. She knew enough of the *baron's* general sentiments on such subjects, it is probable, to make her conclude that she should find in his judgment and assent a support and comfort in the sacrifice of her own most cherished notions. Her excitable fancy, therefore, immediately took the alarm, and springing up with a look of renewed frenzy, she exclaimed, "Great Heaven! do you come, then, to announce to me that my son is *dead*? Yes, yes—it is so! I have heard the banshee of our house shriek thrice, indeed, at midnight; but I thought it was only to announce my own approaching, wished-for end. And was it for *him* the dreadful voice resounded from the depths of the lake where our ancestor drowned the whole clan of the Sullivans, with their wives and children, to secure the inheritance of these hills and waters? Speak the word, Baron! My son—Ferdinand, my son—is dead!"

Mr. Behringbright hastened at all possible speed to dissipate this idea. He forgot the excellent precautions he intended to take, and abruptly assured the countess that, far from being dead, her son was alive and well, at the Rose and Shamrock, in Killarney, awaiting only her

permission to cross the water, and obtain an assurance of pardon and conciliation in her arms.

"Is he married to Emily, then? and does he bring her with him?" inquired Lady Glengariff, turning ghastly pale, but otherwise less shaken than might have been expected by the intelligence.

Again that strange, gasping pause, on the part of Mr. Behringbright!

How, in reality, could he shape language to inform the haughty descendant of the great O'Donoghue of the Lakes, who had just effected so immense a victory over her own pride of ancestry and consciousness of social superiority, that, after all, the rejected governess was, in her turn, so likely to reject—or, if she did not, would prove herself utterly unworthy of—the offered distinction and love?

In this dilemma, Mr. Behringbright took refuge in the notion that it would be highly improper, and even dangerous, at such a moment to cause so painful a revulsion of feeling and ideas in the unfortunate lady before him. This conviction favoured his own wish to escape from so momentous a decision, if possible, altogether, in his own person. But, at all events, until he had duly weighed and considered the bearings of the question, and the best means of extrication. He contented himself, therefore, by stating that, so far from having consented to a marriage unauthorised by her ladyship, Miss Maughan had utterly refused to entertain the idea, had shunned the society and entreaties of Lord Glengariff with the greatest resolution and perseverance, and remained in Belfast, in the situation of a governess, precisely in the manner arranged between the countess and herself before they parted.

"I can well believe it, Baron; and I must have been demented indeed when I deemed that best of young creatures capable of a crafty and deliberate falsehood," said Lady Glengariff; "but what you say confirms me in the plan I have acceded to; and my son has only to ask it of me to induce me to write to Emily, to entreat her to return to all my former affection. Nay, more—as his wife!—and then, Nora," she added, with a deep sigh, turning

to the tall and strapping attendant, who stood with folded arms behind her chair, and, in truth, more resembled a man than a woman in her powerful make—"and then, Nora, you can let my poor little Gwendoline return to me without danger. For would you think what a wretched creature I am, dear friend? They have been obliged to banish Emily's little pupil to her aunt's, the Marchioness of Towmond, in Scotland, under the apprehension that, since I had seen *THE VISION* again—"

But then Lady Glengariff paused, looking at Mr. Behringbright with aghast and horror-stricken, but yet most yearning and pathetic eyes,—such as I have seen, methinks, a cow give when the butcher carried off the rope-bound, bleating calf in his cart,—fraught with the like powerless look of reproach at the inexorable, uninterfering destiny of the world—though *she* herself had been the hapless destroyer of her offspring.

Mr. Behringbright knew what that look meant, though he had only a very indistinct idea of what horror was included in the expression, *THE VISION*. Only the unhappy victims of the family madness of the Glengariffs were aware, indeed, of the full terrific meaning of the words.

He hastened to interrupt the association of ideas. "Oh no, Lady Glengariff; I am quite certain no such terrible calamity can ever again occur. Every body knows that it only occurred *then* at all in consequence of the birth of your dear little daughter, and the carelessness of your attendants, in a moment of delirium—usual enough, I am informed, after sufferings so intense. Lady Gwendoline may be sent for immediately, Mrs. Macnab. Her brother intends to reside at the Castle henceforth."

Mrs. Macnab gave a strangely-puzzled and uncertain look at the speaker, and slightly shook her head. But all she said was to the effect that it was the joyfulest "hearing she had heard" for many a day in Glengariff Castle. Willing, in the unsettled state of his own mind, to shun further discussion at the moment, Mr. Behringbright then gave directions that a flag should be hoisted as a signal for Lord Glengariff to come over to the Castle, and asked

for leave to withdraw awhile and refresh himself after the fatigue of his long journey.

He thus avoided any further explanations at the time with Lady Glengariff; but with so little advantage to any conclusion he was in hopes to arrive at in his own mind, that he purposely kept out of the way of Lord Glengariff until he had arrived and had an interview with his mother. And as this was of a very affecting nature, and the young earl dreaded to renew the terrible visitation under which his relative had so lately suffered, until he was assured she was prepared, and the countess still preserved so much of her pride and repugnance to the great sacrifice she had announced her willingness to make, as to desire to seem to yield to her son's solicitations rather than her own convictions,—neither spoke a word on the subject that was uppermost in both their minds. Nor did Mr. Behringbright, when he learned this fact, attempt to raise the spirits of his young friend by declaring the favourable condition of affairs he had ascertained. Truth to say, the matter had become complicated altogether out of his calculation and soundings, and he knew not what to do. Only a sort of instinct suggested to him that it would be best to do nothing to heighten expectations certain to be so much more cruelly than ever disappointed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BUSINESS.

BUSINESS is said to be the great foe of love :

“ ’Tis typified

In the fine fable, where brown Exercise,
The hunter, young Adonis, Venus' self
Scorn'd, lying all a-rosy in the fields,
Among the yellow cowslips, with stretched arms.”

And the business in which Mr. Behringbright now found himself engaged ought, in all reason, to excuse the fact that for the next three days after his arrival in Killarney he did not devote meditations so entire and unbroken as

he otherwise might to the image of Madeleine Graham. For a "masterly inactivity" is in reality more arduous than any species of exertion of the human faculties, and Mr. Behringbright had arrived at the conclusion that there was no policy like that for him to pursue.

What in reality was he to do—in possession of two secrets which so thoroughly neutralised each other? True it was that Lady Glengariff was now willing—almost desirous—that her son should marry Emily Maughan. But this Emily Maughan, according to Mr. Behringbright's information and thorough credence, loved another. Yet was it for him to speak the word of the riddle, and plunge all again into misery and confusion?

Now, in the first place, however well convinced on his own score, Mr. Behringbright remembered that he had no other authority but a casual conversation with a young lady, and a slightly suspicious observation of his own, for concluding that Emily Maughan was in love with and engaged to Camille Le Tellier. This seemed but a very slight foundation on which to take upon himself a revelation involving the happiness and fate of several persons, all of whom he wished exceedingly well. He could not make up his mind accordingly to the propriety of taking the step. On the other hand, it struck him as wrong—almost wicked—to say or do any thing to encourage hopes and plans which he believed to the last degree fallacious and deceptive.

Therefore it was that Mr. Behringbright maintained, during several days after his arrival at Glengariff Castle, a strict but most uncomfortable and uneasy neutrality of silence.

In vain did Lord Glengariff, on several subsequent occasions, inform him how delightfully calm and reasonable he had found his mother; how she had herself introduced the forbidden subject, and spoken of Miss Maughan without any expression of anger or resentment; nay, had even inquired how she was in her health when he left Belfast, with evident kindness and interest. Finally, had let fall expressions of regret, which he scarcely knew how to interpret, at her absence; even a kind of wish and wil-

lingness to recall her. The young lover eagerly sought explanations of this mysterious change from Mr. Behring-bright, and to extort from him such as favoured the reigning passion in his breast. He only obtained sad and commiserating looks in return—and that oracular silence which always brought down the soaring hopes of the enthusiast, as the lifeless air of the Dead Sea refuses to sustain the palpitating wing of the bird.

The puzzle of this position—the consciousness of the disagreeable explanations in store—kept Mr. Behring-bright's mind considerably engaged and harassed in one direction. A crowd of business letters poured in upon him in addition, as soon as he arrived at Glengariff, which required consideration and answering. And all this, as we have said, made sad havoc with the beauteous Madeleine's projects; and had the interregnum continued for any length of time, and had that skilful girl played the part of the losing gamester, and not appeared at the table, matters might have gone on very differently, and Mr. Behring-bright have returned a free and but little more uncomfortable man, in due course of events, to his counting-house in London.

There is an inert set of beings of us in the world—indeed, we are by far the majority—who, if we were not set a-going by others, would never move at all, or, at least, only in the most orderly and undisturbing clockwork manner imaginable. We are the great ocean, tormented by the winds and storms of a light minority's passions and fantasies. But for that one little Corsican Cocked Hat's caprice for an Universal Empire, more than a million folks, it is calculated, might have gone to their eternal rest in quiet graves, who were forced to lie down in confused masses, sliced, shot, stabbed, and otherwise very shamefully abused and hacked in their persons, on all sorts of bloody fields and waves of glory! And Mr. Behring-bright, of his own impetus, would never have fallen into the way of such grievous mischief as befell him. But there was a throng of restless spirits about him, bent on achieving their own and other people's doom.

Lord Glengariff was the first to lose patience with the

status quo. He renewed his representations to his *ci-devant* guardian, of the extremely quiet and conciliating tone now adopted by his mother, in all that related to the subject of disagreement between them. He drew the most flattering conclusions from her demeanour, and was satisfied, he said, that she was even desirous on her own part to come to some discussion and arrangement of the affair. It was true that she might suppose it would be decided in her own way, and that his return was accepted by her as a token of submission. Nothing could be less founded on fact than this; and it was cruel to let his mother form so baseless a conclusion. The longer time she had to fix it in her mind, the more injurious and shocking would the disappointment prove. And therefore it was as much as for any other motive, he said, Lord Glengariff claimed his friend's promise to aid him in breaking the true state of affairs to his mother, and demanding and obtaining her sanction to the renewal he was determined to make of his offer of marriage to Emily Maughan.

Severely pressed, but still tormented by indecision, Mr. Behringbright thought to elude the difficulty by assuring the young lover, in general terms, that it would be utterly useless to make the proposition to his mother. Besides, there was no such particular hurry. What hurry was there? Emily Maughan was in good and honourable keeping—and his mother's mind was not yet sufficiently poised, after its recent shock, to bear renewed agitation.

"Where's the hurry, you say, Mr. Behringbright?" said the young earl, looking at his friend over the breakfast-table, as they sat alone together at the meal, on the occasion alluded to, with an astonished, almost a hostile, expression, in the irritation of his impatience at the calm advice—"where's the hurry!—The most beautiful creature in the world left in the midst of a great city, where she will find as many admirers as she looks upon men, and—where's the hurry, say you?—Good heavens! I don't suppose you would mend *your* pace, Mr. Behringbright, if you saw the gates of Paradise open, and a notice put up that all the world might try and get in for one half-hour only!"

What had this expression to do with the thought that occurred to Mr. Behringbright at the moment, that it was the fourth day of his arrival from Belfast, and he had never once crossed to the mainland to ascertain whether Miss Graham and her friends had come—as she had declared they probably would—on an excursion to Killarney?

Another recollection revived with this in his mind; and sincerely compassionating his young friend, and intending his good, he made the appalling rejoinder, without considering the probable effect, “You are quite right in your apprehension, I should say, Ferdinand; and, indeed, I think it very probable that Miss Maughan’s affections are already engaged elsewhere?”

“Heavenly powers, Mr. Behringbright!—what do you mean by tormenting me so?” exclaimed Lord Glengariff, starting up from the table with a violence that almost jerked it over. “This is the second time you have told me this, in that cursedly calm and convinced manner! Let me know the worst at once, then. Tell me the whole truth. Do you suppose—I say, do you suppose—have you any reason to suppose—that Emily Maughan is in love with—ha! ha! ha!—you must excuse me, but it really makes me laugh—with *yourself*, Mr. Behringbright?”

This time Mr. Behringbright was enabled to reply with composure, though not without a shade of pique. “You are quite right to laugh, Lord Glengariff, at so absurd a supposition. A young person fifteen or twenty years my junior!—who has only seen me half-a-dozen times in my life!—and not a very ravishing object to look at either, you seem to say! Laugh on, pray;—there is no occasion to restrain so very natural a mirth.”

“Forgive me, Mr. Behringbright, forgive me; but the bare notion of a favoured rival with Emily sent me wild. All is well, since you do not fancy *yourself* at all in the game. She knows nobody else; and it *was* ridiculous of me to apprehend—I mean, I must not trouble you any more for your interference, after giving utterance to such an absurdity; but I *will* know the best or the worst of what I have to hope or fear from my mother at once.”

Lord Glengariff snatched up a morning paper, which he generally made the opening for his earliest visit to his mother's apartment, and rushed out.

Mr. Behringbright remained alone, thoughtfully swallowing three eggs and proportionate dry toast (there are good appetites to be had at Killarney), and gazing from the open windows over the scene of watery enchantments below.

"It is the magic lake of the romances," he murmured to himself, gazing from the sapphire-tinted sky to its diamond-hued reflection in the water, and thence to the chimneys of Killarney town, visible in the distance; "and is the sorceress fittest to rule over its splendours *there*?"

Upon this, Mr. Behringbright took a notion that he would cross the lake himself that forenoon, and *inquire if there were any letters for him in Killarney*; and he was about to leave the breakfast-room in pursuance of the plan, when Lord Glengariff suddenly returned.

Mr. Behringbright did not exactly know what to make of the look of this young nobleman on the occasion. There was an extraordinary elation in it, mingled with anxiety and query he could not understand.

"All is arranged—all is happily concluded at last, Mr. Behringbright!" exclaimed Lord Glengariff. "You may congratulate me, if you will, upon my happiness. My mother herself has been the first to speak out. She saw how dejected I looked, and frankly inquired of me why I delayed to ask her consent for the return of Emily, declaring that she herself felt perfectly desolate and deserted in the loss of her society, and imputed her last dangerous attack entirely to it. And when I told her that Emily would not, of course, return to a house from which she had been ordered by the mistress, without a recall on her part, my dear mother told me she was quite aware of that, and was perfectly willing to write to Emily herself with her own hand, and request her, with every imaginable kindness of solicitation and reconciliation, to return to Glengariff, and make it henceforth and for ever her home."

"Oh yes I suppose so!"

"But that is not all," Mr. Behringbright; for when I

told her that, of course, after what had occurred, Emily was only likely to consent to return to Glengariff on one condition, my mother answered, 'Yes, certainly. I have long made up my mind to the necessity. Emily Maughan can return to our roof, Ferdinand, only as the betrothed bride of my son.' And then my mother added, Mr. Behringbright," continued the young lord, with a stern and scrutinising glare at his elder friend, "that she communicated her consent to you on your very first interview with her, on your arrival here! Why, then, have you never told me so, but left me exposed for so many days to the tortures of suspense and fear?"

It cannot be denied that Mr. Behringbright looked, on his own part, pretty considerably guilty and confused on this severe and evidently jealously suspicious interpellation. He would not have been so embarrassed, probably, but for the recent exposition of the young gentleman's ideas respecting his possible personal motives in the matter. And now to throw the blame of his reserve on so air-spun and conjectural a suspicion of Emily's actuating motives, as Madeleine had furnished, seemed only likely to increase the suspicions he plainly saw were entertained against himself. One girl's flippant fancies about another—was that a basis, moreover, on which to proceed to decide upon the destinies of two lives?

Unhappily, too, a solution of the perplexity occurred to Mr. Behringbright too much in accordance with the quiet confiding tone of his own mind not to be adopted. If Emily Maughan really loved and preferred her Frenchman—if her mind was so magnanimously constituted as represented—it was perfectly easy and safe to leave the decision of the affair in her hands, without his own evidently unwelcome and suspected interference.

Mr. Behringbright was not now revolving for the first time this way of getting out of the imbroglio comfortably; he came fast enough, therefore, to the conclusion; but he was hardly so ingenuous as usual when he replied to Glengariff that his lordship's mother had certainly let fall some expressions to the effect he had communicated, but her mind was not then in a state to build with any certainty

on what she said, and he had been unwilling to awaken hopes which might be destined thereby to severer disappointment.

Lord Glengariff appeared to be satisfied by this explanation, but it is probable he was not. And then he informed Mr. Behringbright that her ladyship desired his counsel and assistance in composing a proper letter of recall for Emily, and wished to see him in private on the subject.

"She says *I* shall be sure to suggest nothing but enthusiastic nonsense," the young lord concluded; "so I am not to be present. All I want you to do, therefore, is to prevail upon my mother to let me be the bearer of the letter in person. She is unwilling for that only,—and it is what I desire above all things in the world."

"Certainly not," thought Mr. Behringbright, who perceived how inexpedient it was, if the refusal he expected ensued, that Lord Glengariff should be at a distance from all friendly control and soothing, exposed to the fury and excitement of his violent passions, receiving so mortifying a check.

In his subsequent conference with Lady Glengariff he therefore earnestly urged upon her not to consent to this part of the scheme: and, with a view of preparing her also for disappointment, slightly suggested his reasons. But he found her ladyship absolutely incredulous—impervious to all possible hints and intimations in this direction. The idea that any woman who had seen her glorious son should not prefer him at once and for ever to all mankind was altogether out of Lady Glengariff's range of comprehension. She was, however, very willing to restrain him from a journey back to Belfast, though on very different motives. "We must not seem positively to beg the hand even of our bewitching little governess," she observed smilingly, as she concluded her letter. "And Glengariff has confessed to me enough of his doings in Belfast to throw an appearance of eccentricity and rashness in his proceedings that ought to be avoided most especially on this occasion, or the young lady herself, and people in general, will be taking what we mean in such

sober earnestness for a new freak of his extravagant humour. Tell him so ; but I give him leave to enclose the most loving letter a lover can indite in mine. And I think you can easily persuade him to be reasonable in this way, Baron, if you add that his going to the North would only probably retard Miss Maughan's return here, as it is not likely she will consent to return with him."

This last argument had its effect on Lord Glengariff, though he heard at first, with evident impatience and disdain, Mr. Behringbright's candid statement that he had dissuaded his mother from granting him the permission he had required. Finally, he acquiesced in the general arrangement ; wrote thirteen letters, out of all which he produced one that he still deemed inadequate, but which most members of the fair sex would have found almost irresistible in its pleading ; and folded it, unsealed, for enclosure in his mother's most kind and affectionate epistle, which he graciously approved on perusal.

Nothing indeed could be more complete and winning than Lady Glengariff's renunciation of her previous opinions as regarded her son's devotion to Emily Maughan, and the warmth and tenderness of the entreaty with which she requested that seemingly fortunate young lady to return to Glengariff Castle as the bride elect of its lord, and the daughter of her own choice and love.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A PICNIC AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THIS interruption occasioned that Mr. Behringbright did not go to Killarney as he had intended that day ; and anxiety as to the results took such possession of his mind, after the decision was fairly put upon the die, that he really lost a very great deal of his interest in his own concerns for a considerable subsequent period.

And yet was not this, in some important degree, Mr. Behringbright's *own concern*? Did not results of great importance to himself hang on the solution of the curious

social problem of which Emily Maughan was seemingly at once the propounding and was to become the solving sphinx?

If she should prove herself, after all, an ordinary woman; if dazzled by the splendid prize now placed in her clutch, without too perilous a vault, she should discard—for the *second time*, be it remarked!—an object of girlish preference, and accept Lord Glengariff, would not Mr. Behringbright find himself thereby placed in a more difficult position than ever?

Was he to stand by and see the son of his friend made the dupe of a false-hearted, mercenary preference—the most abhorrent of all to Mr. Behringbright? Or must he show up its real nature to conviction, and ruin poor Emily's fine prospects? *Poor Emily*, he could not help saying to himself, what had she done to *him* to justify him in so unkind an *exposé*? *Loved* him once, it was but too certain. Should he in return do what in him lay to cut her off a splendid fortune?

But did no other sentiment mingle with this very proper and conscientious one in the heart of George Cocker Behringbright, when he bethought himself how very probable it was that Emily—hopeless on the score of her first love, with little but a dandy-doll exterior to attach her in the second—would see the merits and claims of the young chieftain of Glengariff in their really irresistible light to every other eye?

I am very glad that commentators of my calibre are not called upon to explain the inconsistencies of human nature, but simply to put them on record; else I should be a good deal puzzled to account for the pain the notion certainly gave Mr. Behringbright. Assuredly he was not a man of very inordinate self-love. Had extremely little of that pride of old Spanish royalty about him, whose very steed, once mounted, might never again be bestrid by an inferior cavalier. He had no notion that Emily ought to pine herself into a grave on his account, or consign herself to one of those open cloisters of the world, in which so many disappointed persons of the female sex give over their hearts and affections to solitude and celi-

bacy. But still, did he *quite* relish the idea of Emily Maughan, awakened from her nonsensical early dream, flourishing over its decay in all kinds of brilliant substantialities?

If, however, Emily remained faithful to her antecedents—still justified the admiration of her candid young friend in Belfast as to her disinterestedness and devotion to another—what an agonising disappointment, what tortures of vain passion and regrets, were in store for Lord Glengariff!

These mingled and opposed hopes and fears greatly harassed Mr. Behringbright; to say truth, frightened him with the possibility that to indulge any further in his own daydream might lead himself into the danger of similar pains and penalties. When women *were* good and disinterested in their feelings, what strangely-influenced and capricious animals they seemed to be! And what was there in *him* to induce him to cherish the hope of inspiring a young beauty with affection, when the gallant and gifted Glengariff failed, in such a paltry comparison? It would certainly then, all considered, be but common-sense to keep out of the way of Miss Madeleine Graham of Belfast, even if her own business or pleasure led her, as she had intimated, so invitingly to his vicinity. And so Mr. Behringbright came to the conclusion that he would only await the result of the renewed offer to Emily, to be at hand to do the best he could under the circumstances for his young friend and his afflicted mother; and meanwhile that he would adopt the Ulyssean policy, and *tie himself to the mast*, in the guise of not stirring out of the Glengariff grounds, or the mountains behind them, until he could leave the whole witching place on his return to London.

In this resolution Mr. Behringbright persevered for, finally, ten whole days after his arrival at Glengariff Castle. Albeit every snort of the distantly-arriving Killarney-Junction trains went to his heart, and he frequently amazed the Glengariff gamekeepers and the dogs he took out with him on pretended sporting excursions—which the very deer themselves, the supposed objects, seemed at

last to ridicule—by standing transfixed on the sides of the hills, gazing over the placid waters of the Lower Lake towards those remote white whale-spouts of vapour, as if they had been rare and singular phenomena.

Mr. Behringbright's perseverance in this respect was perhaps rendered more remarkable by the circumstance that the young chief of Glengariff—wontedly a very keen sportsman—rarely if ever accompanied him on these mountain strolls, but crossed as regularly as the post-hours over to Killarney, twice a day, when once the necessary interval had elapsed in which a reply from Belfast could be expected. Indeed, the longer this was delayed, the more certain that intelligence was about to arrive, did Lord Glengariff exhibit himself, to judge from the increased punctuality of his visits to the source whence the healing waters were to flow.

At first the countess was enabled to console her son by a ladylike and feminine suggestion that probably Emily wished to give herself an appearance of pause and hesitation, which well become a youthful woman under the circumstances. But by and by this explanation ceased to be satisfactory. The interval assumed became so very long. Meanwhile it occurred to Mr. Behringbright that it was a case of real balance and hesitation between a preferred and a wealthy and titled lover. But of course he did not like to give Glengariff the benefit of the illumination in his own mind.—Still no answer! And the time certainly at last grew to be inexplicably protracted.

There was only one person, in truth, in all Ireland at that time, who could have explained the matter; and that person was *not* the Postmaster-General. And yet the letter, to which a reply was so anxiously expected by persons of so much importance, had passed twice backward and forward by the agency of that functionary's nimble sprites in the otherwise unnecessary interval.

The inconveniences of ingenuity are sometimes so great as almost to turn the balance against the advantages; and now the truth is, that in so cleverly arranging her plan for Camille Le Tellier to write to her as to Emily Maughan, Madeleine Graham had not calculated certain unpleasant

consequences that now loomed threateningly into view. How could she? She did not know the necessity of her going to Killarney at the time; until, in fact, she had ascertained that Mr. Behringbright was going into the lake district, and was not likely to return to Belfast. In making her dispositions afterwards for the emergency, getting her dresses in readiness, reconciling her father through her mother to the expense, killing off Dr. Bucktrout's imaginary patient at a moment's notice, Madeleine also found it advisable to provide against a danger produced by her own excess of precaution. During her absence, a letter intended for her might fall, according to the direction, into Emily's own hands. A letter from Camille! There was utter ruin in that.

The risk was not great while Madeleine was on the spot. All letters directed to Emily were, by order, brought first to her, and of course Camille's handwriting indicated what were to be retained. Moreover, Emily's real correspondence was very limited. She had only received a few passionate scrawls from Lord Glengariff, which she had not known how to decline without exciting suspicion; and a letter from her mother, who always wrote when quarter-day was near, to ask her dearest child to spare her the smallest fraction possible from her salary for some most necessary and pressing household or educational debt, with which she dared not trouble Mr. Behringbright, good as he was and continued to be—God bless him! though he now so seldom came to receive her thanks and blessings in person—to her and her fatherless orphans; an appeal which rarely failed to leave Emily as bare and shillingless as if quarter-day never came to governesses in Ireland. But Madeleine considered with alarm what might happen in her absence. Honor was faithful, but was a giddy careless girl, engaged in sweethearting on her own account, and had only such skill in handwriting as can be acquired in any number of years at a charity-school. She might easily mistake or overlook the all-important letter on some fatal occasion; at least there existed a tremendous possibility, not to be hazarded when so much was upon the die. Not even her mother, usually

so subservient to her plans and wishes, could be trusted by Madeleine in such a conjuncture : no mother could be made a confidante in such a case.

On the other hand, Madeleine found herself unable to countermand her instructions to Camille. She had received a letter from him—in reply to the last the reader has inspected over the fair writer's shoulder,—conceived, certainly, in very vague and flighty terms,—stating that he had formed an immense project for their happiness, founded on the noble generosity and sensibility to the misfortunes of two unhappy lovers, which he conceived to animate the breast of a rich Englishman, whose acquaintance he had made, but stating pretty clearly that this project required his absence from Belfast. He did not state whither he was going, with the exception that he intended to anticipate his customary journey in the south of Ireland, in order to leave time to proceed in the execution of his plans. But his beloved Madeleine would not miss him, since she had herself prohibited his approach to Belhaven Square for so considerable an interval, or would pardon an absence her fondest Camille meant to devote altogether to the concerns of their passion ; the whole concluding with a rhapsodical statement that he believed the term of their suffering was fast approaching, and that the god Plutus, hitherto inexorably their foe, might be induced, at the passionate prayer of the most devoted of lovers, to interpose to secure their union and perpetual happiness together.

Madeleine was too well accustomed to her lover's flights of imagination to place much, or any stress, indeed, on this intimation. Her own wishes and purposes were turned quite another way ; and far as she knew Camille carried his Gallic ignorance of every thing out of the sphere of his national notions on things in general and particular, she never for a moment dreamed that the writer's romantic projects were on the generosity of a man whom *she also* knew to be the wealthiest of British merchants ; encouraged simply by the fact that Mr. Behring-bright, after refusing to fight a duel with him, had interposed and probably saved his life in a playhouse row !

Accordingly, had the millionaire remained in Belfast, Madeleine would have been pleased enough at Camille's departure from the scene of operations. His presence would have been a great hindrance to her own schemes, in that case. He would probably have conceived suspicions, and required explanations—tedious at best, perhaps perilous to success—however implicitly she calculated on influencing him by the sordid motives she believed of paramount authority with him; but under the change of circumstances, the danger previously alluded to was very far from being obviated by Camille's voluntary exodus. On the contrary, he would be almost certain to send news of his progress in his plans, whatever they were; and it was to provide against so formidable a contingency as that of his letters falling into the hands of Emily Maughan, that Madeleine found herself driven to the extreme step of ordering Honor, on her life and fidelity, and as she hoped for a beautiful green-poplin gown, on which the waiting-wench had long set her mind, on her return, to transmit all and every letter directed to Emily Maughan, under cover to herself, Miss Madeleine Graham, of Belfast, at Killarney.

I am of opinion that Madeleine simply provided against the danger in question by this precaution. I am persuaded she had no wish at the time to intercept any communication intended *bonâ fide* for Emily—on account, chiefly, no doubt, of the danger of so doing. But thus it befell that the Glengariff missives twice crossed almost the length and breadth of Ireland, on a transverse line, ere they reached the hands for which they were originally intended; and this, of course, occasioned the delay with which the countess and her son became both of them at last so extremely puzzled and annoyed.

Miss Graham and her retinue, consisting of Doctor and Mrs. Bucktrout, arrived in Killarney the day after those communications had, at all events, started to their legitimate destination.

The kind-hearted girl took a most affectionate and cordial farewell of all other relatives and friends before leaving her native city on this little pleasure-trip. Above all,

she made it her business to see "dear Emily," and assure her how much she loved her, and how little she cared to go on such a tour, with no other company than her uncle and aunt. "You know *they* have not the least real pleasure in beautiful, romantic scenery and all that, dear Emily! But——How I should have enjoyed *your* company! But you have made yourself so very, very useful and agreeable in the family, mamma cannot possibly do without you now; and she says she will have you, and nobody but you, to go with her and the children on their sea-bathing at Derry, in August, and I am to stay at home and keep house for papa."

"Are *you* going only for the scenery, Madeleine?" inquired Emily, with a smile full of a bitter sadness she could not repress.

From the moment she heard that her kind friend was bound for the lakes, on which stood Glengariff Castle, and whither Mr. Behringbright had gone, the poor girl considered her doom as fixed. She knew that nothing had been said or proposed of this excursion until that gentleman, in his character of Brownjohn the commercial traveller, had announced his own intention of going thither. The fun and scoffing of the very Graham children had let her into the secret that their uncle and aunt had no means for pleasuring of the kind, unless they were aided and abetted at Sir Orange's expense. And so, though Emily had no earthly—still less supernatural—reasons for the belief, she felt as certain as if she had it on the oaths of all the deans and chapters in Ireland, that Madeleine knew who Mr. Behringbright really was, and had made up her mind to entrap him.

Strange intuition of the heart! But what was Emily Maughan to do? What right of interference had she?—when the project was to be realised at a distance from any possible hindrance on her part too—and when, so far from having evidence of the full real guilt and dishonour of Madeleine Graham's relations with another man, her pure woman's nature never so much as suspected such a depth of infamy and abandonment;—and when, even in what related to the forbidden love-affair between

them, her right of denunciation was thus cleverly parried?

"No, dear Emily, no. You are quite right in asking the question, and I am *not* going exclusively for the enjoyment I expect to derive from the scenery and company at Killarney: though every body says it is the finest in the world—on a small scale, you know, not like the Alps—and that they have hardly ever had so splendid a season for visitors as they have this. I am going to be out of the way of that odious Frenchman's noise and upbraidings, because I have at last seen how right you always were in warning me against encouraging him, as papa was so determined against my marrying him,—and he has no money; and I have written to him the only letter I ever did write, or ever intend to write to him, to say the thing must all be over now between us for ever. And if you would take the letter to Widow Welshe's, your own dear, kind self—for you know papa and mamma both have forbidden me to go into even the street he lives in—and they are so good, and papa is so cross, I dare not disobey. And still I don't like to trust the letter to the post."

Emily, who had so often counselled her former school-friend, and really in most respects kind and conciliating entertainer, under their altered relations, to take this precise step, and extricate herself from so unbecoming a connection, could not well refuse a favour so asked, and apparently so small; and thus felt herself deprived of her previous right to impeach Madeleine's good faith in any man-trapping plans she might pursue on Mr. Behring-bright, and herself made the instrument to secure her rival's freedom and safety.

However, there was apparently nothing for it but submission to fate; and finally, satisfied with the elaborate precautions she had taken, Miss Graham departed, as we have stated, for Killarney, with her avuncular retinue. Dr. Bucktrout himself asked no questions, and was told no lies. Satisfied that, somehow or other, there was money found for the excursion, he did not inquire in the least its meaning or its motives, but packed up his fish-

ing-gear and bagpipes in a small separate hamper, and left the charge of every thing else to his wife and his niece. Mrs. Bucktrout, whose mental capacity was not very greatly in advance of that of a black-beetle, excepting in the article of religion, where she thoroughly understood herself, was nevertheless very good at taking charge of luggage, and bargaining with hotel-keepers; and had other valuable qualities in a *chaperone*, for a young lady who desired rather to manage than to be managed. And *she* contented herself with a general vague impression that the able beauty of the family, whom its members looked up to as certain some day to make a splendid match which would advance all the rest, had some grand project in view in the present march out of camp.

Accordingly the Bucktrout party—to give it its ostensible principal's name—proceeded at once to Prospect Palace, a noted hotel and boarding-house in the locality indicated. There they entered themselves as BEST DRAWING-ROOM BOARDERS, for a week certain, with sleeping-apartments to correspond, at a moderate tariff, considering the good things and privileges annexed to the quarters. And there, on the first morning after her arrival, Madeleine, dressed with enchanting simplicity, commenced a general and particular prospectus of her field of operations, and was voted the belle of the hotel by nearly all the young men before her first breakfast among them was over.

Madeleine, however, on her own part, found little to turn her from her predetermined projects. There was, it is true, among the guests an old *roué* marquis, who was reported as a person of immense wealth and possessions, who chose to amuse himself by joining the general society in Prospect Palace, instead of consigning himself to the august seclusion of a suite of private apartments. But this great nobleman was really unconscionably old; had false teeth, false hair, false almost every thing; and a reputation for debauchery which would have rendered any body but a marquis totally disgusting and inadmissible into all decent society. And though it plainly appeared that his lordship was still pervious to the charms of the

fair, since he had very recently figured as defendant in a divorce-case, attended with some unusually infamous circumstances, Madeleine herself really could not bear the idea of attempting to attract this horrid old titled satyr, with his big shining false teeth glaring as conspicuously on the gold wires in his wide jaws as in a dentist's show-glass. There were strong rumours, besides, that his lordship's property was so hopelessly involved by the extravagance of fifty years—dating only from his majority, whereas it was well known to have begun some years previous to that happy event—that it was not thought worth while putting into the Encumbered Estates Court's distributor's hands. A notion rather supported in so shrewd a calculator's reasoning by the marquis's condescension in joining the common table, and other rather levelling associations for amusement and recreation of Prospect Palace, and which was much opposed to the success even of such a lawful address as so great a personage was not likely to make to a merchant's daughter.

The Marquis of Ramshacklegale, however, preserved great influence in the elections of more than one county of Ireland; and therefore it was, perhaps, that he was attended, as *companion de voyage* and toady, by Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy, of the *Dolce-Far Niente* Club of London. He had no more private address, as far as I can discover, in the Court Guides of that time. This gentleman was at Killarney, in the society of the great man whom he delighted to call "his noble friend"—not, of course, in the primary and original, but heraldic application of the epithet to be found in the Peerages and Blue-Books. And Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy had himself rather an eye for a pretty woman, though he had no notion whatever of compromising his own future fortunes and comfort by any thing so absurd as falling in love with a woman merely for her beauty, or any other unsubstantial quality either of body or mind. Madeleine Graham had speedily some reason to imagine that this gentleman would have no particular aversion to enliven his *séjour* at the Irish lakes by a "flirtation," as it is called, with the prettiest woman he espied thereabouts.

In truth, this was a favourite diversion with Mr. Fauntleroy, and he had made a great many silly Ariadnes of the kind in his time. But Madeleine was thoroughly up to the manœuvres of so kindred a genius; and though she too might perhaps have diverted herself with a little coquetry, the wit lost all substantial chance with her the moment she heard, what the marquis speedily took occasion to drop, that "Fauntleroy was a capital good fellow, no doubt, and clever enough in his way, only as poor as a rook,—the poorest devil of an author and political adventurer you could conceive!" While the marquis's trick was as effectually done, about the same time, by Mr. Fauntleroy's equally friendly aside statement that, "besides being the horriddest old badger in the peerage, he was only titular owner of his vast properties, and, in point of fact, a good deal more a beggar than a fellow who lived upon his pen and wits; for HE had some capital to fall back upon."

There was another—not such a bad chance indeed, altogether—who, with his five sisters and their collective mother, also put their legs (if one may mention such appendages) under the mahogany of the best drawing-room at Prospect Palace. Grassgreen Sparrowgrass, Esq., who was said to be only son and heir to some great London citizen; some most eminent pastrycook, who, according to Mr. Fauntleroy's version of the artless lad's own story, having been seized with a common English malady, called "founding a family," determined to fashion one out of the unlikely dough of his only simple son—daughters being, of course, of no use in the process. Accordingly, Grassgreen had been left principal inheritor of that golden plum which had ripened over the fumes of the soups and cheesecakes of half a century. And consequently the five Miss Sparrowgrasses were forced to go upon the angle for husbands, with very moderate baits in the shape of fortune; and though they were agreeable, tall, and well-made women, entitled to the best, perhaps, in personal respects, they were, in my and Mr. Fauntleroy's opinion, threatened with old-maidism. But it was likely to be just the contrary with the fortunate son, who was besides, of

his own nature, a very simple, confiding, loving sort of a foolish young fellow—just the one to fall a victim to the first bold pretendant; with the exception that he was strictly watched over and guarded by his mother, who was as set as her lately-defunct spouse on her son's achieving an alliance with rank and greatness, and had brought him in pursuit of the ideal to Killarney. For it was thought that Irish peers in general were seldom so rich as to refuse their daughters to wealthy commoners, even of pastrycook antecedents. And the Sparrowgrasses "sunk the shop" so earnestly that you would never have known they had kept one, ancestrally speaking, from their own admissions. Indeed, I do not suppose that the proudest Howards or De Montmorencies ever looked down on trade and traders so contemptuously as the Sparrowgrasses, from the height of their mushroom elevation. Probabilities were, therefore, not much in favour of Madeleine Graham, a merchant's daughter's success with this aspirer to Plantagenetism. And yet I do not believe she would have despaired of success, or have left many stones unturned to achieve it, had she deemed it worth her while with so much more towering a head of game in view—not to mention so inconsiderable a drawback as that the young Sparrowgrass was of an exceedingly feeble rickety frame, to match the feebleness of his understanding.

The greater quarry was not, however, in any strictness of the term, *in view*. It has been shown that Mr. Behring-bright kept pretty closely to the Glengariff domain; at least, extended his excursions only in a contrary direction to Killarney and its environs, among the mountains of the Gap and its ravines. But Glengariff Castle was a visible object from all parts of the shores of the Lower Lake, and became from the very first the cynosure of Madeleine's eyes and expectations.

Yet in vain did Madeleine, duly escorted by her aunt, frequent all the likely places to encounter with another stranger,—the assembly-room, the circulating-library, the news-room, the toy bazaars, the beach, the railway-station, Muckross Abbey and domain, and finally betake herself, like an exhausted stag, to the water, and make almost a

daily round of the three lakes in a boat. Still unsuccessfully. Crowds of visitors in all the land places of resort presented themselves; crowds of visitors in boats on the waters; but nowhere Mr. Behringbright! What could be the meaning of it?

At the very height of her perplexity, also, there arrived an enclosure from Belfast, directed to her in the scrawl of Honor O'Haggarty, but which, on opening, she discovered to contain a letter to Emily Maughan, sealed with a coronet in black wax. A letter which bore the post-mark of Killarney!—a letter which probably contained the secret of the true present, and very likely future, relations of the Glengariff family with Emily, since it was directed in a lady's hand—doubtless the countess's!—a letter which might be of great consequence to herself, since, if it recalled Miss Maughan, and if she accepted the recall, almost the certainty of a most damaging explanation would arise, on her insinuations regarding Camille Le Tellier, between Mr. Behringbright and his *protégée*.

What was to be done? On the one hand, Madeleine had an indistinct impression that to open another person's letter, knowingly and wilfully, was somehow or other very severely punishable at law; yet to let this letter, which might contain the most important intelligence, pass through her possession unexamined, seemed a real folly and a tempting of fate. Much was already hazarded, besides, in the mere detention of the communication. On the whole, Madeleine could not resist the impulse of mingled curiosity and fear, and, carefully scissoring round the grand seal, speedily found herself in possession of the contents.

They could not have been very gratifying, to judge from the expression of her wontedly beautiful countenance, which became distorted into the hideous loveliness of a Medusa mask, as she read them alone in her chamber at dressing-time.

Lady Glengariff's letter of warm and motherly appeal and entreaty to Emily to return was gall and wormwood enough in itself. But there was also the young lord's impassioned enclosure to be perused. And for the first time having the genuine language of a pure, lofty, manly,

high-hearted, and disinterested passion placed before her, Madeleine comprehended, with a truly fiendish exacerbation of envy, and bitter sense of her own incapability of inspiring such, how infinitely less preferable her own miserable successes of artifice and coquetry were, than this genuine woman's triumph of the despised and simple-hearted Emily Maughan!

And this simpleton to be wooed to become a countess! This impertinent meddling creature of a governess, who presumed to sit in judgment on her conduct, and whose whole demeanour Madeleine had always felt a rebuke to her own, was summoned to her chosen scene of action to spoil her greatest enterprise! Her finest chance to elevate herself from the paltry destinies to which she seemed enchained by what Madeleine herself now considered, justly enough, a downright madness and hallucination of the senses in the past.

Moreover, the danger of the probable explanation! Madeleine concluded, with some lack of her accustomed sagacity, that it was not in human nature to refuse such a magnificent opening as was now presented to Emily Maughan. Even if she preferred Mr. Behringbright, it was not in Madeleine's nature to conceive the possibility of her refusing to become a countess for mere love of another!—and of another too who treated her with something not far removed from neglectful ignoring, if not with absolute scorn.

Yet Madeleine reflected it would be too dangerous to suppress these letters altogether. Inquiries would certainly be set on foot; the post-office authorities would track with fatal accuracy the non-delivery of their charge, and worse revelations would then, in all probability, be set afoot! Madeleine meditated; and while she meditated took up a pen from an ink-tray placed, with other conveniences, in the well-furnished apartment. She tried her hand, almost without thinking of what she was doing, at an imitation of Lady Glengariff's peculiarly tremulous and separated but distinct and characteristic caligraphy—found, with a little practice, she could produce almost a facsimile—practised about half an hour, and then added

a postscript to her ladyship's letter, which in her opinion ought to have filled up a blank which remained at the bottom of the last page of the paper. It was to the effect that Lady Glengariff had only written all that Miss Maughan would read previously, to avoid a mortal quarrel with her son, and separation from him; but that her objections to the proposed union were still as strong, as irremovable as ever; nay—were much strengthened by an intimation her ladyship had received of the existence of a prior attachment on the part of Miss Maughan for another gentleman! She entreated her, therefore, to take the responsibility of finally destroying the insensate hopes, and putting a stop to the pursuit of Lord Glengariff, by a refusal which could leave no doubt upon his mind that it was irrevocable. It would be but fair, indeed, to avow the attachment she cherished for another. Nothing could be more effectual to convince her son of the folly and futility of his efforts, against all the wishes and hopes of his family and friends; nothing more likely to restore peace and happy relations between a mother and son, who, until Miss Maughan's affair had intervened, had been the most affectionate and united in the world. And this the supposed Lady Glengariff asked as an act of mercy as well as of justice; as, if these troubles much longer continued, the writer was convinced her reason must give way finally, and the most dreadful consequences, both to her son and herself, might follow. The whole concluded with an earnest request to the recipient not to mention or make any allusion to the postscript, whatever might be the resolution she formed. But the countess's imitator wound up the entreaty with a threat that, if driven to so extreme a course, her ladyship would reveal to her son the information she had received on the subject of the prior attachment she had alluded to, so far, only in the vaguest terms.

Madeleine had little doubt that Emily Maughan would be driven, by the coincidence of Mr. Behringbright's presence at Glengariff Castle, to believe that, having penetrated the secret, either in vanity or kindness, he had communicated an inkling in a quarter where it had been

appreciated. Indignation, shame, doubt would prevent Emily from venturing on a demand for explanations; fear of being forced upon them would keep her at a distance.

Madeleine was terrified, and yet well satisfied with her work; and now had only dexterously to alter the date, transfer the unbroken seal to a fresh environment of black wax, blot out the original postmark, and fold the letters in an envelope to her mother, directed in the initiated handwriting. Then she took it herself to the post-office, and all seemed right again.

Nevertheless, Madeleine felt that she must no longer delay the advance of her grand attack; she therefore gave her aunt to understand that she thought nothing could possibly be so pleasant as to go on an excursion to O'Sullivan's Fall on the Toomies Mountain, and have a picnic, on the return, on the beach below Glengariff Castle. That was wooded to the water, and would offer a most delightful shade. The Sparrowgrasses, she was certain, would like to be of the party, especially if Mr. Fauntleroy would come, with whom that long awkward Helena was getting up a stupid flirtation. Old Ramshacklegal was not to be asked—he was such an odious old wretch; but any of the other boarders that liked might join in the party. Perhaps the servants at the Castle might be so obliging as to let them have a kettle of hot water for tea or punch. At all events, the people there would find no fault with a little harmless revel of the kind in the precincts of the castle-grounds, every body being so obliging about the lakes.

Mrs. Bucktrout, who had of late noticed that young Grassgreen Sparrowgrass was going on in a very lackadaisical sheepish manner with regard to her niece, adopted the notion that this affair was got up with a view to advance that matter. She did all she was ordered, therefore, and did it well. The party was proposed to, and eagerly accepted by, all who were wished to be in the arrangement; and "old Ramshacklegal" only learned what was toward when, returning from his habitual morning ride for an appetite for lunch (he rode for another for

dinner), he found all the boats away from Prospect Palace, and the house nearly deserted of its customary inmates. He was very much offended in consequence, and swore a peal of oaths that frightened the waiter who heard them, and who respectfully suggested that the "gíneral company" did not feel themselves "aqual" to the honour of his lordship's presence, and had therefore not ventured to ask it. The Marquis of Ramshacklegal was not comforted by that; he had outlived the relish of such unsubstantial sweetmeats.

Madeleine, meanwhile, had formed a plan, which certainly did more credit to her inventive faculties and audacity of execution than even the extrication she had so recently contrived for herself from the difficulty of the intercepted correspondence. She watched her opportunity; and as the boat in which she sat with her aunt, rowed by her uncle, young Sparrowgrass, and Darby O'Finn, neared the Glengariff shore, allowed herself to slip backwards overboard, in what she conceived to be very shallow water there. But the exceeding clearness and pellucid brightness of the lake at this point greatly deceived her; and Madeleine Graham, who only projected a *ruse*, suddenly found herself sinking into what seemed to her affrighted convictions at the moment a fathomless depth! What a shriek she raised! What shrieks arose on all sides of the gay party of the pleasure flotilla as the cry was heard, "Miss Graham has tumbled overboard!" Dr. Bucktrout was so stupefied by alarm that he ran the boat a good way off the spot where his niece arose. Young Grassgreen Sparrowgrass yelled amain, but offered no assistance. Darby O'Finn, like a true Irish waterman, could not swim; and, in the universal confusion that ensued, I am not at all sure that Madeleine Graham and her story might not have come to an abrupt conclusion on the occasion, if the owner of a boat, which at this moment rounded below the castle cliffs—perceiving at a glance what had occurred—had not, with most admirable readiness and gallantry, leaped from his barque and dashed like a dolphin to the rescue.

In a moment this intrepid stranger had attained the

luckless manœuvress, sinking for the second time in the inauspicious fluid ; the next, and he caught her by her long floating hair ; another, and she was raised above the water on his left shoulder and arm, while a few stout strokes with the disengaged limbs placed both the rescuer and the object of his care on the rapid shelving of the beach. A slight further exertion placed them in safety on the shore, when Madeleine Graham, staring at her deliverer, but still not oblivious of her own intents and purposes, exclaimed : “ Lord Glengariff !—Oh, how much obliged to your lordship I am ! Do you think I might go up to the castle to dry my clothes ? ”

CHAPTER XXIX.

GLENGARIFF CASTLE.

“ MISS GRAHAM ! And I was on my way to Killarney, to see if there were any letters from—from the young lady who resides as governess in your father’s family, Miss Graham ! Of course—most certainly !—my mother will be delighted to receive any person—to be of any imaginable service to—Pray accept my arm—my fin, I think I may call it on the occasion—to the place, for I shall need drying myself certainly before I can go on to Killarney, or else they will think I have been on a visit to my ancestor at the bottom of the lake ! ”

Such was Lord Glengariff’s rather confused reply to the young lady’s very natural request for hospitality—himself too much pleased and excited with the vision of a person who, in whatever remote degree, was connected with the object of his attachment, to consider the abruptness and predetermination he might otherwise have noticed in it. Nay, a transporting thought occurred to him, on recognising Madeleine, that Emily had arrived in Killarney under her friendly, her all but sisterly convoy and accompaniment. And so, during a good portion of the speech above recorded, he was anxiously searching, among the now nearing flotilla, for the beloved face and form.

But nowhere recognising either, his lordship concluded by offering the indicated assistance, after running the water as well as he could off the drenched sleeve of his summer paletot.

"Uncle and Aunt Bucktrout are with me—may they come too? The rest are going up to the cascade on the Toomies for a picnic, and they can go on. They intend to lunch on broiled salmon, cooked on arbutus skewers, in the open air—it is said to give such a fine relish to the fish!—and they will not care for my absence. If I had been drowned, I daresay the champagne would have tasted just as good to most of them; but uncle and aunt are very fond of me, and have brought me on an excursion with them to the lakes; and I did so want to bring dear Emily with me too, but she would not come. She seems to have taken quite a hatred to Kerry ever since she was ordered to leave it by your mamma, Lord Glengariff. She is such a proud girl, though no one would think her so, much, to look at her; and she told me a thousand times, when I offered to bring her, that if you and all your family, and the great Ghost O'Donoghue himself, were to come crawling to her like worms all the way from Killarney to Belfast, to beg her to come back here, she never would, until she had trampled on all your prides and insolence into the very dust!"

"Did Emily say so?—Emily *Maughan*!" inquired the young lord, with something of the incredulous iteration of Garrick, when the aspirant of theatrical glories informed him he wished to make his *début* in Hamlet—"What! Hamlet the *Dane*?"

"That was her answer. But I suppose your lordship don't concern yourself much about the airs a governess may give herself? I should think you could easily enough get another governess for your little sister?"

"But she did not say she would *never* return to Glengariff? When she had properly let people see she had a spirit of her own, and could resent the way she was treated—as she had a perfect right," exclaimed Lord Glengariff.

"Oh, no! Emily did *not* say she would *never* return to Glengariff; and I think if she were let alone a bit in her

obstinacy, she would come round much sooner. That is the way I should do if I were Lady Glengariff. Some people only get haughtier and more insolent the kinder and more considerately they are behaved to by other people. A beggar on horseback is bad enough; but when you hold him the stirrup to mount, it is no wonder if he gives you a kick.—Dear aunt, there is no occasion for a scene. I am not a bit the worse, I think, except that I am wet through, skin and all; and Lord Glengariff (this gentleman is Lord Glengariff) has most kindly offered to let me go up to the castle, and dry myself at the houskeeper's fire, after, I am sure, saving my life—for none of you would have been of the slightest service."

"Don't say that of *me*, Miss Graham," exclaimed Mr. Fauntleroy, who had now arrived. "I, at all events, intended to die with you; for though I cannot swim, I was stripping off my coat to plunge in after you to the bottom, when——"

"When my Lord Glengariff, who can swim—which rather diminishes his merit, of course—plunged in with his coat on, and saved me! Well, all you go on to the cascade and the picnic, and if I possibly can I will join you very soon. At present I do feel very cold—all of a shiver!—Uncle, do you think I shall have a fever?"

Dr. Bucktrout looked at his niece, as much as to say that it entirely depended on her own will and pleasure; but only ejaculated, "I hope not, my dear!" and felt her pulse.

On the whole, Madeleine, leaning on the arm of her stately young rescuer, and followed duteously by uncle and aunt up a cleft in the hills, fashioned into a good though rather steep road to the castle above, had the additional consolation of thinking that she left the general company much annoyed at her absence. More especially as, in spite of some broad hints, Lord Glengariff extended no invitation to any one else, but seemed in reality lost in a gloomy abstraction, until Madeleine, renewing her shiver, begged him to lead on at once to the mansion, as she felt most uncomfortably chilled and depressed. Dripping then like a naiad and merman, the twain paired up on the path

to Glengariff Castle, and very soon arrived on the terrace before it.

Fortune still continued favourable to Madeleine at this conjuncture. She could scarcely have wished herself better luck than befell her in the fact that, precisely when she reached this elevation, Mr. Behringbright, having lunched with Lady Glengariff, was doing himself the honour of escorting her ladyship on the very brief promenade she usually took on this terrace once a day, listening with wary attention to her alarmed conjectures on the causes of Emily Maughan's prolonged silence, without daring to allude to his own conclusions on the subject. But the dialogue had sent back his thoughts to Belfast, and revived with such distinctness and play of allurements and beauty the image of Sir Orange Graham's daughter, that he had come to the resolution, or the weakness, of crossing to Killarney, to ascertain whether the enchantress had arrived there, as soon as Lady Glengariff favoured him with a dismissal. And now what strange and mingled welcome and unwelcome vision arose before his actual gaze, in the persons of this youthful pair of streaming water-divinities emerging on the castle-terrace from a private gateway, so abruptly from the deep glen below that it almost seemed as if they must have floated up direct from the lake into which the torrent of the O'Sullivan Falls discharged itself by that course! Certainly Lord Glengariff was a fitting representative of the great O'Donoghue of the Lakes at this moment. But could it really be Miss Madeleine Graham leaning thus familiarly on his arm, and with her light muslin garments hanging in as graceful welts around her faultless figure as ever sculptor fashioned on his decent water-nymph?

Mr. Behringbright could hardly believe his eyes! But, in truth, people ought to distrust those organs of information much oftener than the common saying would authorise; for what a beam of joyful recognition suddenly lighted up in Madeleine Graham's when, in her turn, she seemed to recognise an unexpected and most-wished-for apparition in him!

"You here, Mr. Brownjohn? Oh, I feared—I thought,

I mean—you must long since have left Killarney,—never seeing or hearing any thing about you, after you had so kindly promised !” she exclaimed, darting her glance upon him, and pleased to see how he paled and quivered at the stroke.

“Mr. Brownjohn !” exclaimed Lord Glengariff ; and he was hastening to correct the mistake, if the subject of it had not prevented him.

“Miss Graham knows me, in Belfast, as Miss *Maughan’s* cousin, my lord, as I did myself the honour to introduce myself in Sir Orange Graham’s family. Miss Graham knows me as Mr. *Brownjohn*, and it is unnecessary to repeat the introduction !”

“Yes, Mr. Brownjohn ; neither mamma nor I can ever forget how kind you were to us in crossing the Channel ; though being dear Emily’s cousin gave you so much stronger a claim upon any return we could make, when we found that you were so. But oh, I owe more than ever I can possibly dream of repaying to your noble patron here, Lord Glengariff, who has rescued me, at the risk of his own life, from a watery grave !”

“Nonsense, Miss Graham ! Pray don’t mention it. I never ran the least risk of my life ; I can swim like a fish !” said Lord Glengariff, blushing at the warmth of this eulogium, but considerably perplexed and annoyed by what he now understood of the pretended relationship and assumed name of Mr. Behringbright with Emily Maughan. “The truth is, mamma,” he added, playfully, in explanation to his mother, who looked much surprised, “this young lady fell accidentally out of a pleasure-boat just as I was crossing to Killarney in ours, and I picked her out of the water, and have brought her up to the house to dry her clothes, and prevent her taking cold on her return with her party.”

“Every attention shall be paid . . . Miss Graham, I think you say, Ferdinand ?” observed Lady Glengariff, with singular coldness and austerity of manner, even considering her usually haughty and reserved demeanour to strangers. “Mrs. Macnab will see to it.—Nora, procure Miss Graham a change of clothes from my wardrobe, and——”

"Oh no, your ladyship, I am not tall enough, and I do feel so ill and chilly. If I might just go to a bed for a few hours, while my own clothes dry!" ejaculated Madeleine, shivering now excessively.

"Good heavens! Miss Graham seems very ill! Lady Glengariff, for goodness' sake let an apartment be prepared for her at once!" said Mr. Behringbright, rallying from his surprise into another emotion of compassion and alarm. "Dr. Bucktrout, don't you think it much the best?"

"Much the best!" echoed that gentleman, who thought he perceived an intimation to that effect in his principal's eyes.

It was so decided. Nora Macnab, summoned from the dining-room, where she sat seemingly quietly at work knitting woollen stockings for her half-dozen sons, but keeping her eyes on her unfortunate mistress in her promenade, undertook to convoy the young lady to a proper chamber. And thither she was about to retire, attended only by her aunt, Lord Glengariff evidently considering he had accomplished all that could be expected from his courtesy as master of the house. She went at first with a firm step, as if her strength had quite returned. But on a sudden Madeleine wavered in her advance, gave an exploring, giddy look back on the group she was leaving, and would no doubt have fallen to the ground if Mr. Behringbright, touched by an electric shock of sympathy, had not sprung forward at the moment and caught her round the waist, and supported her in both his arms while she fainted on his breast! At least, her whole frame appeared to lose animation, her beautiful head sank upon his shoulder in the most approved broken-lily attitude; and though her colour did not change, as her eyes closed, and she remained powerlessly drooping in that alarmed embrace, as Dr. Bucktrout immediately certified that she *was* insensible, I do not see why any suspicion of a *feint* rather than *faint* should arise in the innocent minds either of reader or biographer on the occasion.

But whatever was the reality of the case, Mr. Behringbright took it all for gospel, and, almost swooning himself

with anxiety, tenderness, and satisfaction at being the mortal so blessed, carried the beauteous exhausted form into the dining-room opening on the terrace, where every species of restorative was immediately called for and applied. With the happiest results in the end,—thanks as well to Dr. Bucktrout's skill, who held the pulse and prescribed the general treatment, while Mr. Behringbright officiated with almost laughable zeal and assiduity as principal executant of the Æsculapian decrees. He was rewarded, however, poor man, by the exquisite expression of gratitude, confidence, and affection in those beauteous eyes, when, at last, they reopened and perceived who was holding Mrs. Bucktrout's vinaigrette to her nostrils—whose kind arm propped her head to the exact elevation ordained by Dr. Bucktrout on the sofa.

Of course, after this nervous crisis, there could be no thought of transferring the lovely patient to any other place of quiet and repose than she had found, particularly as she expressed a great wish to remain undisturbed where she was until she was sufficiently refreshed to return to Killarney. "For," she repeatedly observed, with a species of wildness and confusion in her manner, "I don't want to remain here, dear aunt! It is not a proper place for me! I have no right, no claim, though Mr. Brownjohn is so good as to assure me of his lordship's permission.—Dear Mr. Brownjohn, how very, very good you are to me! How good you all are!—his lordship too, after saving my life at the risk of his own!"

Mr. Brownjohn was secretly touched and flattered with the notion that it was dread of the increasing interest the poor young creature felt in her casual steamer acquaintance that induced her now to desire to leave the place *he* inhabited. At the same time he was greatly annoyed at the exaggerated estimate she seemed to form of her obligations to the young earl, and otherwise was satisfied with the notion of her removal from a spot where so many persons knew him to be who he really was. It was so delicious to fancy himself liked and preferred for himself! So did his waking dream lap the millionaire in elysium!

The general result was that Madeleine was left in the

dining-room, on her sofa, to seek some interval of repose, attended only by her aunt and Mrs. Macnab. Lady Glengariff prevailed upon her son also to retire, and change his wet clothes. Dr. Bucktrout had lunch served him in a private apartment, awaiting news of his niece; and after the whole singular episode, the countess and Mr. Behring-bright found themselves once more promenading the terrace, and discussing the circumstance. The now rekindled elder lover, however, was not destined in the first instance to derive much satisfaction from his exchange of ideas on the subject with her ladyship. He had taken the opportunity at once to inform the countess, that the object of her hospitable kindness was a daughter of the highly-respectable Belfast family where Emily Maughan had found an asylum, and to express his interest in her on that account, when she interrupted him with singular vivacity—"I hope you feel none on your own, Mr. Behringbright? I hope not—and for *your* sake."

"For my sake, my dear Lady Glengariff? Pray explain yourself," he replied, rather consciously, but surprised too.

"You will be vexed, and think my poor brain has gone off again on one of its flights—and it may be so," said Lady Glengariff, passing her hand—a common gesture with her, and with other persons affected with her malady—over her brows. "But when this young girl sank into your arms, I saw her glow out all over with a curious phosphoric lustre, like a tainted fish in the dark. And wherever you touched her—your hands, your shoulder, even your left cheek, which was once close to hers—I saw you crust out also with the same sort of bright leprosy! Depend upon it this is not a good young woman! Believe me that her soul is corrupt, almost to that degree which is moral death and putridity, and that you run the greatest risk of the contagion in approaching her."

"What a dreadful, what a horrible notion, Lady Glengariff! Your poor head must indeed be filled with horrors to imagine this! If there be any light about Madeleine Graham, it is the light of youth, beauty, and innocence; and these appalling fancies convince me, more than the most unfortunate intervals you have suffered. that your

mind is radically diseased," replied Mr. Behringbright with strong indignation, even in his accents, and with a bitterness of expostulation which, remembering a moment after whom he was addressing, he as quickly repented. It was, however, a very dreadful idea; and observers endowed with Lady Glengariff's tremendous faculty—if she really possessed it—are not to be envied in this world, and do well to seclude themselves from general society.

The topic was painful to both parties, and was then dropped. But it was destined to be an eventful morning: and hardly had Lady Glengariff heard, with considerable puzzle and scrutiny, Mr. Behringbright's request that he might always be addressed as Mr. Brownjohn before Miss Graham, having introduced himself by that name in the family of Emily Maughan's protectors, ere Lord Glengariff made an abrupt and exceedingly startling reappearance on the scene. He looked as pale as his own wraith, and held an open letter in his hand, which quivered so that the nervous shake of the paper plainly revealed his tremor. This he handed, without the utterance of a single word, to his mother. Nor did he speak to Mr. Behringbright, from whom, on the contrary, he turned with a strange expression of countenance, and, folding his arms, walked away to the battlemented edging of the terrace over the rocks on which the castle was based.

Lady Glengariff took the communication with eagerness. She recognised the handwriting of Emily Maughan.

In reality, it had happened with this letter as it often happens in such affairs. The watched pot never boils. What we expect with anxiety, look for at every turning, comes after all, in general, unexpectedly—very seldom indeed to the hour and instant of our expectation. This was the only day for the last ten that Lord Glengariff had not presented himself in person for the desired reply from Emily at the Killarney post-office; and now it had come to him, when, for a short time, he had almost forgotten to expect it, in the regular course of delivery at the castle from that town.

But the contents of that long-expected despatch! Nothing good seemed implied in the young lover's agast

and pallid aspect, in his abrupt gestures and sullen withdrawal. But when the countess had perused the letter with dazzled and staring orbs, she instinctively hurried to his side, as he stood, with his moodily folded arms, frowning down upon the precipitous heights of the Glengariff crags at the white stream of silver in the ravine below, that marked the descent of the O'Sullivan cataract.

"My son! my dear son! think no more of her! She prefers another—she avows it! Remember only what is due to the nobility of your birth, to the honour and pride of a man and a gentleman! Dismiss her for ever from your thoughts!"

And so saying, Lady Glengariff attempted soothingly to embrace her son; but he repulsed her with an unwonted harshness—or at least withdrew himself from the maternal pressure.

"No, mother," he said in a voice husky with emotion; "you are the cause of the misery to which the remainder of my life must be abandoned. Do not mock me with this pretended kindness!"

"You hear my son, Mr. Behringbright! But tell me in what way can I be held accountable for the contents of this unhappy letter?" said Lady Glengariff, extending the epistle to the family friend, who, alarmed by what he witnessed, had also drawn near.

"Mr. Behringbright probably knows some one who is much more responsible than your ladyship in the matter!" resumed the young man, with extreme bitterness.

Taking no notice of the implied accusation, though he felt it, Mr. Behringbright took the offered paper, and read what greatly surprised as well as greatly pained him. He had not expected from a young woman of so much modesty and gentleness of character, so plain and almost defyingly resolute an avowal of an attachment for another, to the man who had placed his young heart so unreservedly at her disposal, as he now found in Emily Maughan's reply to Lord Glengariff's renewed and most passionate proffer of marriage, backed by his mother's assent and invitation.

Madeleine's insidious forged postscript had produced its full effect upon the intended victim. Her mind, al-

ready in a state of intense torture and irritation, was stung to a real madness of disdain and grief by the conviction it forced upon her, that her unreturned love for Mr. Behring-bright was not only known to him, but betrayed by him in the very wantonness of cruel power and scorn. What else could Emily Maughan imagine was meant by the intimation that the countess was aware she preferred another to her son? Who else could she believe to have divined and divulged the secret but Mr. Behringbright? He it must be who had offered her up a sacrifice to his own vanity; or possibly merely with a view to get rid of a troublesome responsibility, and rescue his ward from a union with a person whom he himself (doubtless) so ineffably despised!

Emily's letter reflected the anguished and irritable state of her feelings on this consummation of her misfortunes. Suffering is nearly always unjust, and some strange principle in the human mind would seem to render it in some degree pleasant to us to make others share the ills we experience. I do not know that a row of persons in the toothache would be much consolation to each other; but it is different, apparently, in moral affliction; and one would say that, although she permitted herself no other revenge on the mother, Emily had found a bitter alleviation for her own misery in heaping up that of the son. It is certain, at all events, that no refusal could be more heart-rendingly explicit—no statement of preference for another could be expressed with more unmistakable resolve and precision—than in this fatal and decisive epistle. Lord Glengariff could no longer doubt that the fate of his first and, as he believed it, only love was sealed.

In all other respects, Emily had more than observed the supposed injunctions and entreaties of the false postscript. She made no allusion to having received them, but desired in conclusion, with extreme coldness, to have her respectful acknowledgments of her ladyship's condescension and kindness duly presented, with her regrets that she could not avail herself of her kind recall and generous proffers.

The only sort of explicitness in which Emily failed

was precisely the one that would have been disadvantageous to the plans of her secret foe. She gave no sign that she knew or suspected that this preferred "other" was Mr. Behringbright. She could not bring herself to acknowledge her feeling of his unkind and unhandsome conduct towards her in this instance by doing so ; not to mention the powerful restraints of female pride, and the indignation of a pure-minded woman, who believes that her innermost sentiments have been profaned by the cruel boasts of a traitor.

Lord Glengariff himself needed no interpreter of the reticence. "She gives a very good reason, does she not, for refusal, Mr. Behringbright?" he observed bitterly, when that gentleman, having finished his perusal, looked inquiringly towards him. "*She loves another!*—and *who* can that other be, do you think now, Mr. Behringbright?"

Mr. Behringbright felt that he could no longer stand this sort of thing ; that he really ought not, considering that he had only to pronounce a word to exonerate himself from an unjust and, he began now almost to feel it, dishonouring and degrading suspicion. Moreover, it occurred to him that, since the blow was struck, it would be better to make it a decisive one, mortal to hope, than to haggle on with a series of lesser wounds, under which the victim could only slowly and with protracted suffering bleed to death.

"Well, I do think I know who that other is, Lord Glengariff," he replied sedately, on these considerations "and I should say you will be satisfied of the reality and hopelessness of Emily Maughan's preference for another, when I tell you it is *not* the rich Behringbright, whose pretensions to external rivalry you might justly hold in doubt and contempt, but a penniless young French adventurer, who seems endowed with the kind of exterior women admire, whom she prefers to you and all mankind besides!—The very man, in short, whom you nearly threw into the pit at the Belfast Theatre ; which is, in all probability, one of the reasons of the extreme hardness and insensibility to the pain she inflicts visible in every line of this epistle."

Lord Glengariff stared, as if stupefied for a moment, at the speaker. "How do you know this for certain?—how do you know it? Good Heaven! is this the explanation of all your lugubrious hints and warnings? Why did you not speak out at once? Why need you have prolonged my misery so ineffably?"

"You would not have believed me on my unsupported statements. It *is* the explanation of my attempts to make you aware of the baseless quality of your expectations. But to declare by what means I became possessed of a secret which was confided to me under promise of preserving it one," Mr. Behringbright concluded, reflecting how uncomfortable it would be for Miss Graham to be brought into the affair while under that roof, "you must excuse me, Lord Glengariff. And indeed I may say that nothing but the confirmation offered by the refusal you have received satisfies me that I have been truly informed, and that Emily Maughan preserves at least so much of the natural goodness and magnanimity of her character as to persevere in the senseless preference she has formed for a contemptible swaggering fop, in spite of the splendid allurements offered in your alliance."

There was a short pause.

"Well, I suppose she is in the right," said Lord Glengariff; then, with a smile that probably concealed a much sharper agony than tears could have expressed: "*She* is in the right, and *you* are in the right, Mr. Behringbright—and my mother *was* in the right. But nothing but her preference for a tea-grocer's lad, do you say the fellow is?—could have set *me* all right again too. Henceforth I sha'n't trouble much more about these angel-seeming persons; I shall take up with mere mortals, and amuse myself accordingly. And, *apropos*, that sort of charming creature—which, after all, are the only sort people who feel they sha'n't live for ever themselves ought to go a-gadding after—You remember how that poor Tithonus was served, that couldn't die and was always old, in consequence of the stupid goddess in love with him asking immortality for him, and forgetting to ask to keep him as young as ever for ever—What am I talking about?—I

wonder, I say, how that delightful Miss Graham is getting on by this time?—Mother, shall we go and inquire?"

Mr. Behringbright did not like this flighty turn in the tune at all; but what could he say? Nothing—although he felt so much annoyed and offended that he remained behind; while the countess, rejoiced to find her son take the affair so much more lightly than she had thought probable, proceeded on the errand with him. Mr. Behringbright, however, learned very shortly after, with a different species of concern, that Dr. Bucktrout pronounced his niece excessively feverish and excited, and had begged it as a favour—which could not possibly, under the circumstances, be refused—that she might be allowed a bed for the night in the castle.

CHAPTER XXX.

ARMIDA IN THE CAMP OF THE CHRISTIANS.

MISS GRAHAM, I am happy to report, was much better on the following day. She was even able to join the family dinner-party, and spend the evening with Lady Glengariff and her son, when she was additionally favoured by a special invitation from the countess to remain at the castle for another day, or even two or three—until, in short, her strength and nerves were completely restored from the shock of the immersion she had suffered. And this was the kinder on her ladyship's part, since—as has been seen—she had taken no very particular fancy herself to the youthful visitant. But her son had made it his business to request her to exhibit this mark of civility; and Lady Glengariff was but too glad to do any thing that seemed likely to sooth and divert his mind. And it appeared, from the attentions he paid Miss Graham, that she interested him.

Not that Lady Glengariff wished or apprehended that these would prove more than the promptings of a momentary caprice. It appeared, indeed, impossible to her, that a young man who had loved Emily Maughan, and with

such passion and devotion, could, by any species of imaginative fascination, be induced to transfer his affection to a girl who was in almost all respects her exact opposite ;—dark hair, dark eyes, a rich and glowing complexion, a manner sparkling with coquetry and allurements ; nothing at all of the repose and virgin womanliness of withdrawal which constituted the main charm and loveliness of Emily's demeanour, and matched well with her fair and maidenly presence and person.

The opinion did not, however, seem so extremely well founded to Mr. Behringbright, who, searching into his man's heart, almost believed he found there that a passion disappointed in its object turns with impatience and disgust from the mockery of a repetition of its lost illusions, or only seeks their renewal under forms and conditions disassociated from the original cheats. Men's first and second wives, for example—to select from those greatest of all disappointments achieved in success—I think I have observed, seldom exhibit any marked resemblance, either of person or character. And though a rejected lover's case be in some respects about the reverse of an inconsolable widower's, still there are points in common that Mr. Behringbright appreciated, and which drove him to the conclusion that there was no safety in the fact that Madeleine Graham and Emily Maughan were young women very like reverses of each other in almost every mental and corporeal attribute.

What increased Mr. Behringbright's annoyance and apprehensions in the affair was, that he was not present at the dinner Miss Graham was enabled to partake of on declaring her convalescence, and consequently knew not exactly how things went on at it. Lord Glengarriff himself satirically pointed out to him, that the young lady would be much surprised if she found a person in the rank it had pleased him to make the acquaintance of the Graham family,—who seemed to have only come on an errand from his master to a nobleman's residence,—placed at the table, and treated on an equality with the family and their guests. George Cocker could not deny the incongruity ;—nay, anxious more than ever to sustain

his incognito, he had resolved to excuse himself on this very ground when the occasion should arise. But Lord Glengariff's anticipation and seeming urgency in the matter greatly annoyed and disquieted him.

His absence from the party, however (the reasons of which it is probable Madeleine perfectly divined), contributed to a result that relieved him. He learned from Mr. Molloy, the house-steward, that a carriage had been ordered for the evening, to convey the "drowned young lady" home to her hotel, and that she had declined the countess's invitation to remain as much longer as she could make it convenient at the castle—"And though my lord himself asked it as the biggest favour in life," the puzzled official added.

The truth is, Madeleine Graham, acting under the light of her own clear intellects and full private information on the subject, was not for a moment the dupe of the young lord's sudden outbreak of gallantry towards her. Else she might have fallen into a great error; and, stimulated besides by her natural spirit of coquetry, might have entered on the perilous process of making herself a seat between two stools.

I have no doubt in my own mind that she would have preferred Lord Glengariff to Mr. Behringbright, in himself. He was by far the handsomer and younger man—ranked higher in society, although Madeleine did not value rank at much. Indeed no philosopher of the most republican school did ever, it is likely, cherish so real and genuine a contempt for the prejudices of society, as regarded such mere external and adventitious claims to distinction. And Lord Glengariff was of very competent revenue, though not by any means so rich as the elder candidate for favour. But with all these pleas in his lordship's behalf, there was one great and saving drawback. Madeleine was thoroughly in the secret of that affectation of a sudden fascination and enthrallment feigned by Lord Glengariff, and knew that it was merely a reaction of despair and disdain at the treatment he must by this time have sustained from Emily Maughan; for she calculated to an hour when the reply would arrive at Glengariff, and the quotient had

been one of her motives to resolve to place herself there, in readiness to watch over the emergency, at the particular time she did. Her expressions to her deliverer on the subject were part of the plan. No considerations sufficed now to turn her from the precipitous steps in point of fact forced upon her by her audacious original act of treason against Emily Maughan.

She built no hopes, therefore, on Lord Glengariff's proceedings, nor dreamed of changing her course of action on so fitful and unsubstantial a gale of opportunity. Contrariwise, the overacted and delusive scorn of the pretence only increased her irritation against its prompting cause. And this—since she had injured Emily Maughan so deeply and perilously—was fast deepening into as strong a feeling of hatred and dread as a bosom all whose impulses began and ended in self could be supposed capable of. But, in truth, the men and women who are thoroughly of our and their age neither love nor hate to any extraordinary excess, but make their feelings of all kinds subordinate exclusively to their interests. Madeleine perceived a means to advance her own ends in Lord Glengariff's move, but otherwise it did not much distract her attention. Even to annoy Emily with the notion of her rejected lover's speedy forgetting and transfer of affection—which was most likely his lordship's fevered, pettish motive—had only a slight and occasional attraction for her.

Thus, on full deliberation, Madeleine determined to declare herself convalescent on the next morning after the accident. What use was there, in the first place, to lie in bed in a remote chamber in an old castle, attended by an old woman, and occasionally visited in state by a countess whose son she did not intend to marry, and who might ask inconvenient questions?—for Madeleine never liked to hazard more falsehood than was absolutely necessary for her purposes. No one else was likely to enter a young lady's sick-room. The purpose of her visit to the castle seemed accomplished, if there was any credit to be placed in Mr. Behringbright's enamoured looks—in the perseverance with which Mr. *Brownjohn* asked, hour by hour, after her progress towards recovery. If there was any use

in exhibiting the languid interesting airs of an invalid, that could be done. Wherever she now retired, Armida felt she should be followed. At the same time she could give a signal proof how little the homage with which she was treated by the master of Glengariff Castle had temptation for so true and generous a soul! She had, therefore, the sagacity and firmness to refuse the very kind invitation of the countess to remain until her strength was quite restored, which was pressingly seconded by her son. "A million, million thanks, dear Lady Glengariff, and my Lord!" she said, her eyes filling with tears of gratitude as she refused, in the hearing of Mr. Molloy and Nora Macnab. "But, in spite of all your goodness, I do not feel at home in great mansions, among persons so superior in rank to myself. I need rest and quiet above all things, and I shall find them best at the hotel where we are staying. Uncle himself recommended it, who saw how much better I was when he left me last night to tell them not to be alarmed at Prospect Palace. Dear aunt is quite frightened and unhappy at the idea of mamma and papa hearing of the accident. Only, before I went, I should like to thank that kind Mr. Brownjohn for the extreme care and goodness aunt says he showed for me when I was so ill yesterday—unless he has started for London again—has he?"

No: Mr. Brownjohn was still at Glengariff, having only just ascertained that his business there must be a failure.

"Your devoted governess, Miss Emily Maughan—Mr. Brownjohn's cousin—refuses to return to us," said Lady Glengariff, with a spasmodic smile.

"I was afraid so—afraid for dear Emily's own sake. But people who have sweethearts—especially we stupid young girls—don't like to leave the places where they live," said Madeleine, quite artlessly.

The countess looked at her son with a mixture of indignation in her compassion; who started up and exclaimed:

"Very well, Miss Graham! If you *will* go, I will be your attendant cavalier back to your uncle's charge. You very pretty young ladies require looking after!" and then

he burst into a discordant, apparently causeless laugh, and was silent for a good time after.

That same evening, accordingly, Miss Graham, persisting in her arrangement, left Glengariff, in the family carriage, for Prospect Palace, Killarney, under the young earl's convoy ; not, however, until she had seen and most cordially thanked Mr. *Brownjohn* for all his goodness to her—that gentleman being informed of her particular wish to do so by Mr. Molloy.

He came—a good deal embarrassed, and pleased, and vexed, almost equally, to find she was quitting such a dangerous society, *in it !*—to the castle-gate, where Lord Glengariff awaited to hand her into the vehicle. He was a witness of her really earnest entreaty to be allowed to dispense with the needless trouble his lordship was giving himself in escorting her back, and had even the happiness to hear her say, “If any one is necessary, I am sure *Mr. Brownjohn* will kindly go with me !” And this expression was accompanied with a look, almost of entreaty, that went to his heart, and compelled him to say :

“His lordship desires the honour, Miss Graham ; but I trust I shall see you again if you remain any longer on the lakes. I intend a pedestrian tour of a few days among them.”

What a bright expression of assent shone up over the enchantress's features as she replied, “Oh, how glad you make me ! We are not going yet. We have seen nothing yet—almost—and my uncle has not half tired of his fishing.”

Mr. Behringbright was a doomed man from that hour—and he knew it.

It is my impression that Lord Glengariff's absence from the castle, on the occasion referred to, appeared most unusually long to his guest ; but, in reality, he did not return till late in the evening—hours after he easily might have made his appearance. He found Mr. Behringbright sitting up for him, trying hard to make believe he was reading a book, which was certainly open in his hands,—*The Colleen Bawn*.

“Waiting for me, Mr. Behringbright ?” said Lord

Glengariff, with a caustic smile. "That fascinating young creature!—I really could not tear myself away from her society before it became almost rudely late—and Dr. Bucktrout would have me stay supper with them. He's a jolly old fellow in his way, and would drink out three lakes dry if they were milk-punch! I shall be often over in Killarney now; because 'I've nothing else to do,' as the song says."

"And I am going to make Killarney my head-quarters for a few days' wanderings," replied Mr. Behringbright, as carelessly as he could manage it; "and then I shall go home. I am very glad to see how quietly and like a sensible young fellow you take that absurd girl's refusal, Ferdinand; and I feel I can comfortably leave you to your mother's consolations. I have explained to her that my affairs no longer allow me to remain away—have taken my farewell of her—and did not betake myself to bed till you came home in order to do the same to you, because I shall be off very early in the morning."

"Oh, you are going to stay a few days at Killarney, are you, Mr. Behringbright?" returned the young earl, with a somewhat lurid expression rising in his features. "Good—very good! You will then be a witness how *very* sensibly I mean to behave myself on this occasion. Moore recommends it, you know,—

'When we are far from the lips that we love,
We have but to make love to the lips we are near!'

I shall amuse myself—but not in the mad way I went on at Belfast—like a *steady, old, knowing sinner, you know, on the sly!*—no parade and noise. You don't quite understand me now, I daresay; but you will before we have done with each other!"

Mr. Behringbright did *not* understand;—how should he?—at least he said he did not, though he coloured rather vehemently. "However, it don't matter," he concluded, taking up his bed-candle. "I suppose Dr. Bucktrout's punch *has* been good—particularly strong, at all events! I wish you a good-night, Glengariff, and no headache in the morning."

"Thank you," replied the earl, drily. "You are always very good to me, Mr. Behringbright! the only misfortune is, that I have taken a fancy you are not quite such a saint as you give yourself out to be at present! Didn't they say you spent a little fortune on that Incognita, and amused yourself by making her the jest of the town? And what is the meaning of your going to Kil-larney now, *incog.*, after this splendid girl?"

"I conceive that I owe no account to you, at least, Lord Glengariff!" said Mr. Behringbright, with indignation.

"I beg your pardon, sir; haven't you read in at least a hundred romances that when a young fellow saves a girl's life, he always falls in love with her afterwards, and protects her against every body else that wants to devour her?"

"Good-night, Lord Glengariff! You rave as usual; but I hope the morning will see you restored to your sober senses!"

So saying, the ex-guardian arose, and left the apartment with an air of offended dignity.

"All very fine!" mused Lord Glengariff, left alone. "But I'll watch the old boy's game, and see what he is after! If he is capable of bad designs on this girl, who knows what may be the real state of the affair between him and Emily? I don't half believe this story of the Frenchman; it don't seem likely in the least. But I'll know the truth of the whole affair before long; and if he has been cheating me—if he has wronged Emily, and introduced her with another—I will have his heart's blood, if he were twenty times my father's friend, and my own guardian! And when I questioned this knowing girl, who is Emily's friend and confidante, she declared she was convinced, whatever attachment that poor dear girl had formed,—those were her very words,—that it was, for some reason or other, a profoundly unhappy one! Well, I have heard these honest-seeming fellows are often enough the worst at heart! But *he* won't do *me* so easily as perhaps he thinks!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

HASHISH.

LANDING early the next morning at Killarney, Mr. Behringbright took up his quarters at an obscure inn a little out of town, as befitted a traveller of exceedingly moderate pretensions, when on his own hook ; and from this point he began (he almost persuaded himself) to study his health, and a taste for fine scenery he could conscientiously believe he possessed, though perhaps it occasionally bored him a little, by excursions on and around the lakes.

Of course, he soon fell in with the Bucktrout party. They were more abroad even than other tourists, in consequence of the doctor's passion for boating and fishing. The ladies did not care for fishing, but they very much enjoyed the air and water, and could take their books and crochet-work with them quite delightfully, without attending to the doctor. Fish do not scream, nor worms, nor flies ; and consequently there is nothing to annoy the tenderest heart in the recreation, carried on by others. Madeleine's bright-green parasol once seen always marked out her locality on the lake, and nothing was easier than for any body else's boat to row accidentally that way. Young Sparrowgrass's often did, though his mother and sisters would have preferred another direction, mostly. But the heir-general had taken a strange fit of obstinacy on water, and would follow his own fancies in this respect. Mr. Behringbright's seemed to set off of its own accord towards the bright-green pavilionette on the shining waves. At last Darby O'Finn, whom he hired as his boatman *en permanence*, ceased in a few days, with national tact, to ask the question, and his daughter steered quite naturally towards it. Miss Graham was there usually to be discerned, reclining gracefully, with an apologetical book in her hand, in the stern, on a heap of cloaks and cushions, in the most charmingly simple morning costumes that art could devise. Chiefly white, I think, or delicately flowered ; mostly with a little nosegay, carelessly gathered, and still more carelessly set in her bosom ; a plaid burnous cast in harmo-

nious folds of softly variegated emerald tints around her ; and her beautiful complexion and sparkling eyes showing to the greatest advantage, from the shade of her brown sailor's hat, with its flutter of scarlet ribands in the breeze.

Mr. Behringbright would not have grudged, if he had had all the trouble of the rowing to do himself, any amount of hard work that way to secure the reward of the brilliant glance of pleasure—the captivating welcome which shone up in the heightened roses of the siren's cheek, on the first occasion they thus renewed their acquaintance. Every body, in fact, was delighted to see him. Mrs. Bucktrout—vaguely understanding he was wanted for some purpose of her niece, though she did not well see what—relaxed from her usual mummylike rigidity over a bitter tract—to greet him. The doctor, indeed, fought rather shy of him at first, thinking him poor, and therefore not at all understanding what on earth his niece could mean by looking so pleased to recognise such a shabbily-dressed person. But he soon took his cue also,—fancied, perhaps, that even this unlikely individual, if no one else was to be had, was to be played off against young Sparrowgrass. He did not puzzle his brain, however, much about the matter, but did, as usual, as his niece seemed to wish him to do:—concealed his vexation at having his lines disturbed ; readily gave permission to his wife and Madeleine to change from his boat into Mr. Behringbright's, and he rowed elsewhere ; kindly seconded Mrs. Bucktrout's invitation to the civil stranger, on their return, to come and see them at their hotel ; and when Mr. Behringbright joined them that same evening there, expanded himself into hospitality and sociability. Nay, Mrs. Bucktrout overcame an intense horror she had of cards, which she wontedly styled “leaves of the devil's book,” and took a hand at whist, on the visitor declaring himself partial to the game. And, indeed, it seemed a most excellent pretext for a frequent renewal of the visit, and nothing could be pleasanter than to play at any kind of game with such a bright and vivacious partner as Madeleine Graham proved, and who seasoned almost every commonplace of the affair with a splendid glance, or an intoxicating

smile, or a brilliant word, or a still more overpowering little half-checked sigh.

After their niece's accident, the Bucktrouts had thought it best to secure her quiet by taking a private apartment in Prospect Palace. But still it was fortunate for the preservation of Mr. Behringbright's incognito that Vivian Fauntleroy, excessively out of humour at Miss Graham's unpolite demeanour towards him when drowning, had determined to cut her; more especially as his great patron, the marquis, likewise disgusted at his exclusion from the picnic, declared the Bucktrouts were a *low set*, and that he would have nothing more to do with them. This pair of worthies, therefore, retired from general circulation in the hotel; but, speedily growing weary of billiards, brandy-and-water, cigars, and one another's lies about women and horses, voted Killarney a bore and a humbug, and set off together for Baden-Baden.

Vivian borrowed the necessary cash for his expenses (the marquis *never lent to any body*, else he would, he said, have relaxed the rule in Mr. Fauntleroy's favour) from young Mr. Sparrowgrass, having forgotten to bring his own cheque-book with him—on the understanding, however, that he was a person who possessed the most influential introductions in London, and would be happy to be of service to any young gentleman who desired to make the acquaintance of the great world there. And young Mr. Sparrowgrass was the more readily induced to believe this, as his sister Helena was thoroughly persuaded she had made a conquest of Mr. Fauntleroy at the picnic, and should hear a good deal more about it in town, in case she did not effect any other more to her mind before returning there. And all the Sparrowgrasses thought it would be a first-rate thing if they could get Helena married. She was growing cross in temper, and *was* so tall and awkward! her second sister, Matilda—who was a little less long, and a good deal more graceful, in her own opinion—often declared.

Every thing conspired for Mr. Behringbright's destruction. Not only the artifice and fascination of the sorceress who had undertaken his entanglement, there was also the

balmily-enervating influence of the summer climate of the Killarney lakes ; the witchery of the enchanting scenery ; the excitement and gaiety of a holiday population—music and pleasure on all sides. And to complete the poor millionaire's dangers, Lord Glengariff persisted in introducing the potent element, in love-affairs, of jealousy.

However the men decry the use of this agency, the women have in all ages understood its powerful efficacy ; and, wherever they could, have mingled the ingredient, any thing short of explosion, which they seldom like or desire, in their love-powder. And this young nobleman appeared on the new scene almost as soon as Mr. Behringbright—with a splendid bouquet of flowers from the Glengariff conservatories in his hand, the principal snowy camellia being matched in the button-hole over his heart, and a gallant request in his mouth, that he might be allowed to do the honours of his native lakes to the fair visitor whom he had rescued from their depths. How was it possible to refuse?—as Madeleine herself had pathetically asked Mr. Behringbright, on casually mentioning the circumstance to him. Although it *was* such nonsense for a grand young nobleman like that to take such notice of plain quiet people like them ! People would be sure to wonder at it ;—only it would have looked so ungrateful and uncivil to refuse.

Mr. Behringbright thus found himself fairly pitted against a splendid competitor, who, reversing the young lord's suspicions of himself, he imagined might really have transferred his volatile affections to so superior a charmer, and to be as capable of honourable intentions towards the new object as he had been to his former idolatry.

Of course this notion stimulated Mr. Behringbright's own natural slowness of purpose, and in other ways greatly contributed to hasten on the catastrophe. On the one hand, Madeleine could alarm him with the apprehension of a rival so formidable in every outward aspect ; on the other, she could flatter his innermost feelings and aspirations with the conviction that he was himself preferred in the manner he had always most desired. Preferred for *himself alone*, since he still sustained the inferior social character

he had originally assumed; thoroughly humoured in the caprice by Lord Glengariff, who, on the contrary, displayed all the advantages of his own position in even glaring and exaggerated lights. Preferred to a young, handsome, wealthy nobleman! What more was necessary to remove the once-impassable Balkan of Mr. Behringbright's incredulity in the sex from Madeleine's path?

It was a kind of problem Madeleine had placed before her, and she proceeded with almost the calmness and precision of a mathematician to obtain her results. Love and jealousy were her sines and cosines for the operation—her “Let A B and C represent so-and-so, and the quotient is so-and-so.” She had to persuade Mr. Behringbright that she loved him, in the first place: a difficult process with a man who had learned caution in a school where the lash welts so deeply into the flesh, and leaves such life-long scores,—who had little or no personal vanity of any sort,—who was not even proud of his riches, but knew their vanity and nothingness for happiness. Given a good strong leverage-point of vanity, and you may lift the heaviest idiosyncrasies. But Mr. Behringbright was extremely far from believing in himself at all: no art could have persuaded him that he was handsome, or young, or sprightly, or witty. He was thoroughly aware that he could neither sing, nor dance, nor make poetry; he had no moustaches, no matchlessly-flowing beard to put faith in. How was such a man to be cajoled?

The enchantress knew but too well that the most efficacious of love-philtres is—love! So divine a nectar *love* is, that even the least artfully-compounded and deleterious imitations, so often commended to the human lip, find a ready acceptance, ever so slightly flavoured with the true honey of Hymettus.

But hers was a most subtly-compounded potion, it cannot be denied. None but the gods themselves could have distinguished it from their proper amber drink. How, then, should Mr. Behringbright—a person who I have never pretended to be distinguished by any intensity of penetration into the mysteries of women's natures—who remembered that his wife had been dull

in intellect, coarsely fashioned in person, impatient, irascible, insolent, and yet had been one of the worst of women? Was it not reasonable, then, to think that a girl of bright wit, endowed with a beautiful person, smiling, tender, submissive as a cooing dove, who *seemed* to love him so well, might really do so, and thus, in that respect also, reverse that worthless *divorcée's* characteristics?

Nay, I am not sure that Madeleine really did not take some kind of liking and affection for Mr. Behringbright while she was thus engaged in his enthrallment. I almost think she did, and was sorry at times that she had so fatally compromised herself with another man as to be obliged to do so many wicked things—to act such a vile, false, unwomanly part—to secure this rich husband. I know she had her qualms of hesitation and relenting—of remorse, perchance—as she grew to comprehend what an honest, manly-hearted, credulous, good sort of a human victim she was dragging to the sacrifice. But these glimpses of better feeling had no more practical result upon her actions than the faint sentiments of compassion that may assail the butcher as he sharpens his knife, and hears the bleating of the sheep in the slaughterhouse. Nay, I do not assert it, but I fancy she had some notion of a degree of generosity and self-immolation on her own part in plotting to bring about the result she aimed at. Was she not doing her duty to her family and to society—following the imperious mandates of the latter—at a great sacrifice of volition and preference? It is true she was her own remorseless controller and persecutrix—the Lady Ashton of her own Lucy. But was even this last poor victim driven into more heartrending consequences by the stern mother and hateful brother than to desert the man she loved to marry another she didn't? Yet this was the course Madeleine Graham set and remorselessly urged herself on. Triumphantly martyred, she rose above the sway of her own inmost natural feelings and inclinations, to follow the tide of opinion into that legitimate issue of a marriage with a million of money!

Such was the object. All this trouble, difficulty,

danger, guilt, betrayal, incurred,—for what? To be a rich man's wife; to have gilded furniture and large mirrors; to have carriages, horses, a town and country house; to wear silks and satins; to have a box at the opera, and consequent right of despising every rational theatrical entertainment; perhaps,—unspeakable consumption of all those earthly blessings!—to be all but crushed into a pulp with one's feathers and jewels in the narrow lobbies of a dirty old palace, “going to Court”!

These must have been the objects, I suppose; for these are the best things the greatest fortunes can purchase. Most decidedly Madeleine had conceived no passion, however well she might counterfeit one, for Mr. Behringbright. She saw plainly that he was elderly—rather bald; that his eyes had no particular lustre, and that he was *not* dressed in the height of fashion. People who are in love don't see these facts. But though she was not in love, she *acted* the passion, as she had known it in those young, senseless days when she really felt it, before the enchanted eyes of her new lover, to a matchless perfection. Her eyes brightened, her complexion carnationed, when she espied him; she listened to his simplest words (and he was not eloquent) with rapt interest and attention; her own voice mellowed to a gentler music—her expressions seemed to steep themselves in an unconscious tenderness, when she addressed him. She seemed wretched out of his sight, happy only when he was present; and yet it was all false, simulated, counterfeit.

Such is the spell of the demon money over our age, that this unhappy girl imagined she was yet doing quite right in endeavouring to secure it at any price. She was not even wronging her really preferred lover, she thought: she intended a share of the plunder for him. In fact, Madeleine was so corrupt she did not know she was corrupt at all. Her business was to secure this wealthy husband; all the rest only told for counters in a game of skill. And secure him she did, as far as lay in feminine fascination and skill. Fate is at times stronger, of course, than our best endeavours—a goddess not to be

appeased, even when we heap her altars with all that is really valuable in existence—throw our hearts themselves to blaze and crackle into dust upon the costly pile!

After all, this must have been a most exceptional case. I take it as the text of a general homily; but Madeleine Graham's cannot have been any thing else, or the end of the world must be indeed well nigh come, and any thing but a millennium of paradise to follow! There must have been something extremely out of the way in so young a woman being capable of such perfidy—something diabolical in so perfect an insensibility and death, at the core of so fervid and lifelike an outward simulation. Nature was outraged by it—by that mass of ice frozen in a centre of radiating fire! It annoyed Madeleine herself to know that it was so. She would have given any thing to feel the emotion she counterfeited. And if for no other reason, perchance from the trouble and anxiety attendant on a *representation*—the constant risk of flaw and failure. It is hard to play a part consistently from beginning to end, even when one has studied it in its minutest details, for the public enjoyment, on the stage. One can't help having one's intervals, however brief, of lapse into the natural. I have heard Hamlet sneeze so naturally as to convulse a whole house with laughter, when all the rest of his enactment was as stagey and *undertakerlike* as could have been desired. And what is the trouble of playing even that most fagging of all high tragedy parts compared to feigning a love one does not feel?

Madeleine's performance, however, was a great success with her principal critic and spectator.

In the first place, the poor man had been all his life longing, thirsting—like the camel in the desert for the living springs—for this draught of heavenly happiness, which he now imagined to be raised to his parched lips;—lips parched to baking and bleeding in that drear passage of matrimony he had undergone, and which he had despaired ever to see open on those rose-gardens of Damascus, shadowed by the date and fig, he now fancied he realised in the shining mirage rising at his feet. It was pleasant to fall into such a snare—to feel the virgin

stirrings of that most splendid sentiment of existence, which Mr. Behringbright had so long resigned himself to believe would for ever elude his experience. He came to it rather past the season, 'tis true, in the reckonings of the almanac, but not in the unploughed freshness and luxuriance of the affections. Love is always young, we know—endowed with an immortal boyhood. And so, to speak the whole truth without any further apologetic ambages, Mr. Behringbright fell in love, head over ears, as passionately and absorbingly as if he had been a Romeo of two or three and twenty.

How people go on when once they are fairly entangled in this sort of maze admits of very little variation, either in actuality or description. Mr. Behringbright grew, in the first place, to consider that a bright-green parasol was the loveliest of all imaginable sights on a Killarney lake, with the exception of the object it shaded from the sun. He thought there never were before so matchless a hand and glove as were occasionally to be seen resting on the gunwale of Dr. Bucktrout's fishing-boat; no music of flute or soft recorder could equal the melody of *that* voice; it uttered no word that was not replete with sense, modesty, sweetness, goodness, kindness, generosity, and feeling. No eyes in the world—the stars of heaven themselves—equalled *those* in tender and penetrating lustre. No one was half so accomplished—sung, played the piano, sketched, distributed cards, like the lovely Madeleine. Likewise, she was the most generous and disinterested of human beings; she loved him, *George Brownjohn*, for himself alone: she could not rationally reckon him at more than three hundred per annum salary, if even that! With all the sparkling and enchanting coquetry of her manner—of her delicious, enthralling smiles—of her whole speaking, animated, ecstatic form—she did not care the least for the splendid rival who ostentatiously presented himself in the character—*τὸ καλόν*—the matchless good of existence—was found!

I am free to admit, however, that without the powerful resource Madeleine found in the jealousy excited by my Lord Glengariff's opposition, it is not likely that the

short interval she managed it in would have sufficed to mature her plans. For it was towards the end of the second week of Mr. Behringbright's enamoured sojourn at Killarney town that matters were brought to a crisis by this young nobleman's means, without his very much (possibly) intending it.

After haunting Miss Graham with noticeable assiduity, in pursuance of his self-imposed duties as cicerone of the lakes and mountains of Killarney, greatly to Mr. Behringbright's annoyance, though he seemed to make no progress with Madeleine, Lord Glengariff appeared—as is usual in such cases—only to grow more obstinate and eager in his advances. He presented himself with a frequency at Prospect Palace that excited general remark; and as he had made himself very useful and agreeable to Dr. Bucktrout, he was always at least welcome to the ostensible principal of the Madeleine party. Of course he thus greatly interfered with Mr. Behringbright's opportunities of private address to Miss Graham, otherwise not afforded him with any unwise profusion by the aunt. But anon Lord Glengariff took to endeavouring to *shine down* his rival, as it seemed, in a series of splendid diversions, which he projected and carried into execution; apparently with the view of amusing and dazzling the young lady into a better appreciation of his now undisguised admiration and partiality.

Perhaps in reality, besides another motive of sufficient power, Lord Glengariff was surprised and piqued into acts, and displays much beyond his real incentives and purposes, by the extraordinary preference of which he beheld himself the victim. His self-love, already severely shaken by Emily's rejection, was irritated, perhaps, into an attempt at assertion against a repetition of so marvellous a defeat. A *repetition of defeat* his lordship still continued, it may be, to suspect it. He certainly meant nothing serious by Madeleine Graham, and yet he bestirred himself as anxiously now as if he did. And she, perceiving the advantage to her own purposes, skilfully accepted so much of the position assigned her as suited them—and no more. What fault could even Mr. Behringbright find—annoyed

as he might be—with compliances that had their source in gratitude for a life preserved?

But Madeleine, finally successful in inspiring Mr. Behringbright with the most passionate and trustful attachment, had come now to feel her foot strike against an unforeseen obstacle. Greatly as he loved her, the extreme diffidence and modesty of his own nature stood in his way to a declaration of his sentiments. He was convinced that she cherished a deep preference for him, but it occurred to himself as the height of presumption and impudence to take such a supposition for granted, and act upon it. He could not reconcile himself to his figure in the glass, to venture on a proceeding of the kind. Opportunities—judicious, *unmeant* opportunities—were afforded him; but he did not avail himself of them. Words half-formed came to his lips, but he did not utter them.

Madeleine grew tired of this, and determined to lose no chance of bringing matters to a crisis. When Lord Glengariff, therefore, proposed to entertain her with what he said was one of the finest spectacles on the lakes—a stag-hunt—she accepted the honour with unwonted alacrity, although she was certainly far from thinking that it would please Mr. Behringbright to know that she was to be made the object of so public a mark of homage. She informed him, however, of the intention in the most indifferent manner, and had the satisfaction to discern that he looked very much vexed and discomfited.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A PROPOSAL.

THAT night Mr. Behringbright made up his mind to propose the next day, at all hazards.

He began to feel his radiant prospects endangered. He comprehended a touch of disdain and indignation in the young lady's careless way of giving him the information; and the thought seized him, like the poisoned fang of an adder, that she was beginning to open her eyes to

the superior personal qualities of his young rival. And what might not come of that?

It was dreadful to conjecture. And so, after tossing all night on a feverish pillow, Mr. Behringbright arose the next day, firmly resolved, as he thought, to put his hopes and fears to the proof—but almost as shaken and nervous at the prospect as if he was going to explore the great secret in a leap from a precipice.

I daresay he never thought so ill before of his little twisted toilet-glass in the poor inn where he had taken up his domicile. It made him look so gray and old, and almost paralytic, really, on one side of the face. And yet what nonsense it was to dwell on these trifles! Was it not plain that, with all his faults, the beautiful Madeleine liked him—preferred him to all mankind? Had not her melting eyes said so many times now and each time more persuasively and inebriatingly than before?

To be sure, those fine eyes had haunted him, Mr. Behringbright remembered, very uncomfortably, in his dreams that night, after he had parted at Prospect Palace with the fair owner, and she had informed him of her invitation to the stag-hunt.

It was a horrid nightmare fancy, no doubt; but Mr. Behringbright recalled, with a shudder, that he had seen those alluring organs of expression shining like jewels in the head of a crested serpent, that had persisted, during a course of miserable dreams, in coiling itself about his heart, and whose terrible weight had seemed to drag him down into a hideous gulf of darkness and terror.

A nonsensical fancy, no doubt; and Mr. Behringbright was aware that, leaving Prospect Place rather hastily and huffily on hearing of the party of pleasure arranged for the following day, he had supped wretchedly at his inn on a very tough *Welsh rabbit*. Quite enough to give any one an indigestion. And the pleading, recalling gaze with which Madeleine had followed him on his pettish exit, might very naturally—no, not very naturally, but very possibly—cause all the rest.

Those who have had the good—but now not very usual—fortune of being present at a stag-hunt on the

Lakes of Killarney—or rather the Lower Lake ; for the poor victim of the sport rarely deserts its native mountain shore of the Toomies—are mostly of opinion that it is a very grand and exhilarating spectacle. The occasion usually assembles a gay and showily-dressed holiday multitude. The waters are covered with a bright flotilla of expectant gazers, attired in lively colours, with white sails spread, and fluttering pennons on the slender mastheads. If the mountains are in a good humour—and they mostly are on these occasions—they display their most gorgeous and changeable hues. The woods and misty summits of the hills—haunts of the startled animals which are to furnish the sport—resound with the shouts of the hunters driving them from their coverts, with the mellow notes of the horn, with the musical baying of the hounds—all repeated in a million cheerful echoes in the nearness, dying away to as many times repeated a ghostly and spiritual indistinctness in the distance.

Such was the scene Mr. Behringbright embarked in his accustomed wherry to join from the town, having been informed by Miss Graham that her uncle had accepted a seat for her and her aunt in Lord Glengariff's boat.

This was a handsome, galley-like barge, easily distinguished by its showy appearance on the Lower Lake, where the company chiefly assembled to witness the hunt. And Mr. Behringbright felt very uncomfortable indeed when he observed the young lord in his chieftain's garb—and looking one every inch—seated beside Madeleine in the prow of the craft, making her share with himself the universal notice and distinction the presence of the great proprietor of the district and giver of the festivity naturally excited.

Mr. Behringbright experienced a strong twang of jealous apprehension, I say, when he witnessed this spectacle. Could any thing be more likely to impose upon the fancy of a girl of taste and spirit than the showy aspect under which Lord Glengariff thus presented himself? A feeling of indignation and contempt at his own folly in having deprived himself of the claims to distinction and homage he also possessed in unbounded wealth, painfully struck

Mr. Behringbright. He could resist the impulse no longer, and, ordering Darby O'Finn to drive his boat up to the "Lord's barge"—a command with which the waterman very timorously and unwillingly complied—he addressed Lord Glengariff, for almost the first time since he had adopted his incognito, in the tone of a familiar and equal, announcing his intention, rather than wish merely, to witness the hunt on board his lordship's barge with his friends from Prospect Palace.

Lord Glengariff was, however, resolved that he should persevere in his assumed rôle, as it appeared. Or else he was more than a little out of temper, and willing to vent his pique. He answered Mr. Behringbright, in a surprised and haughty tone, that his party was made up, and that no more persons could be accommodated comfortably on board his galley; and he was turning the rudder, pettishly siding off, when—singularly pale, but determined, and almost fierce in his tone and manner—Mr. Behringbright addressed the Cleopatra of the scene:

"Since Lord Glengariff's accommodations are so limited and overcrowded, Miss Graham, will you do me the favour and pleasure to step on board my boat, and see the cruel amusement we are here to enjoy from it?"

There was a pause.

The Glengariff rowers, six in number, and attired in a most picturesque livery of scarlet-flannel shirts and green-velvet caps, held their oars suspended with amazement, dripping over the sunny waves that vainly courted the stroke. All the boats within hearing, in fact, listened—particularly that containing the Sparrowgrasses and some other persons from Prospect Palace Hotel. People were thunderstruck at such presumption and audacity on the part of that shabby sojourner. It was thought Miss Graham would laugh at the very idea of such an exchange. But, behold now! Miss Graham arose, stepped so rapidly from the barge to the boat that there was no time afforded for interference, taking Mr. Behringbright's joyfully-extended hand, and responded, in the hearing of all who chose to hear, "I shall be most happy; for I really don't like to be made such a complete exhibition of, Mr. Brownjohn."

Mr. Behringbright was not often what we may call chivalrously gallant, but he was so in this instance. He absolutely knelt on one knee, and kissed the hand that continued locked in his, until he had comfortably seated the fair owner in her new quarters. He then coolly asked Dr. Bucktrout to oblige him by passing over Miss Graham's parasol, and, seizing an oar himself, rowed off before Lord Glengariff could recover sufficiently from his surprise and indignation to give vent to those feelings in articulate sounds.

After such a public mark of devotion and adhesion, Mr. Behringbright certainly could not hesitate any longer to declare his own,—could not fear repulse for them. Yet he could hardly speak for agitation when, obeying his directions, Darby O'Finn and his aquatic daughter shot the boat that conveyed the four under the broad shadow of the Toomies, remote as might be from the now crowding company, which all made for the central Glengariff galley.

"Do you speak French, Miss Graham?" Mr Behringbright inquired, in those tremulous accents.

"A little: I had two or three quarters at school. But why do you ask, Mr. Brownjohn?"

"I want to tell you, without being understood by these good people, Miss Graham, how I thank you,—how I love you,—how I adore you—for your goodness in complying with my request, and rebuking the presumption and forwardness of the splendid young coxcomb who thought to parade you about as a conquest in the midst of his vassalage and these gaping strangers assembled to hear dogs bark, and a wretched four-legged creature run for its life, from their fangs!"

"You owe me no thanks, Mr. Brownjohn; I merely followed my own inclination—I may almost say merely obeyed an instinct—when I complied with your request," Madeleine replied, in very pure French, and with an expressive glance at the speaker.

"You preferred my society, then, to Lord Glengariff's—young, gallant, highborn, handsome as he is?" said the delighted man.

"I prefer your society to that of all the world, Mr. Brownjohn!—I mean—I do not know what I mean! Let us say no more about it. I shall see the show, whatever it is, just as well under your guidance as Lord Glengariff's, and not form so unpleasantly conspicuous a part of it myself."

"You do not care for show and splendour, then?—you could be content to become the wife of a poor man,—mine!—Could you, would you, ought you, Miss Graham?"

"*Your wife*, Mr. Brownjohn?"

"My wife!—I love you, dearest Madeleine!—I love you! My looks, my actions, my whole demeanour, from the first moment I have seen you until this, must convince you so! And the step I have hazarded on this occasion can only be justified by my wish and intention to make you wholly, solely mine!" Mr. Brownjohn exclaimed. "Do you consent? Shall this day date the commencement of all the happiness of my life, *dearest Madeleine*?—I am not young, nor handsome, nor witty, nor all or any thing I should be to deserve you! But I love you with all the powers of my soul and existence, and I will make yours happy, if it be in human power, and you will suffer me to devote my life to the task!"

"But are you aware of what you take upon yourself in the proposition, Mr. Brownjohn? My father would never forgive me for marrying a *poor man*; I know it—he has often said so. He is well off, but he has a large family—and would, perhaps, not be sorry for a reason to——If you *marry me*, you burden yourself with the maintenance of a woman who will have no other means of support but such as your generosity and affection may provide," Madeleine said, in a tone of deep emotion, but extending her hand assentingly to her lover, who clasped it passionately to his breast.

No one can doubt what would follow.

"If this be the only difficulty, dearest Madeleine!" George Cocker Behringbright replied, "I am ashamed to confess it—but—but—I am rich myself—very rich! I am head of the firm I only pretend to represent,—Behringbright Brothers. I am worth, perhaps, a million in money!

—nothing in myself, excepting in the devoted love I bear you. Will you now indeed be mine?"

"You are making fun of me, Mr. Brownjohn, and it is wrong of you! And look, who are these people making towards us as if they knew me—you? Good heavens! Mr. Behringbright! Mr. Brownjohn! I am ill—so agitated! Do let them row me back to the hotel, or I believe I shall die! Do row me home at once, Mr. O'Finn, without a moment's delay!" Madeleine now exclaimed, turning in very truth most ghastly pale and panic-stricken in aspect, having caught sight of a boat in the offing steering apparently towards them.

"Make for Prospect Palace instantly, Darby O'Finn, —the young lady is ill!" said Mr. Behringbright; adding, after a moment's survey of the barque which had seemed approaching them, but was easily distanced by the vigorous strokes of Darby's oar—"I want to be off myself; for I declare there's that Frenchman again, with the detestable American who has such a causeless spite against me! But no," he added, after a slight pause of reflection, "I won't seem to run from either of the trumpery fellows; they will fancy next I am afraid of them, or am ashamed of my betrothed bride. Madeleine dearest! Miss Graham! what makes you look so very ill?"

"Ever since that narrow escape from drowning I had, I take the most unaccountable panics on the water. Do, Mr. Behringbright, let us get to land!"

"But these men have threatened me; I must not seem to shun them,—and you see they seem to want to get up to us," said Mr. Behringbright, in whom a something was roused by this idea little akin to his customary phlegm.

Madeleine looked at him, and perceived that she must rally her courage to face the emergency; that there was no flying from it.

A good deal was certainly required—the courage almost of despair! There, in that approaching barque, Camille Le Tellier sat, no doubt; looking already a thousand recognitions, the least of which, put in utterance, might be the talismanic word to break into shivers all her splendid magic palace of glass, raised by the power of the great

modern sorcerer, whose multiplied forms make truth itself a puzzle and a myth wherever we turn.

It is a great thing to be able to say of my heroine that she quailed not in the furnace-heat now applied to her lustrous inventions—stood to her arms with invincible resolution never to lay them down until they were beaten from her.

Nothing is baser than cowardly guilt. Even a Palmer, who plunges into Avernus with a hop, skip, and a jump from the gallows, dies the less execrated of mankind because of his undaunted bearing. And with all her little faults, it cannot be denied that, of her nature, Madeleine Graham was brave, and defiant, and cool, and resolved, against adverse fortune.

To be sure she was tied now to the stake; and 'tis confidently averred, most of our greatest British victories have been won by desperation. We were making out of France a hungry, half-starved, exhausted little rabble of us, when the French chivalry must needs throw themselves in our way, and, reason or none, force us to fight Crecy, Poitiers, Agincourt, what not? Waterloo itself, according to the best military authorities of that nation who admit that it was lost at all, was only won through bad generalship having rendered it impossible for us to fly the field; that Forest of Soignies in our rear saved us. Still, though a national characteristic, it was something wonderful, that thorough possession of nerve and imperturbable composure evinced by Miss Graham at this juncture—her command of feature and, after a moment's wavering, even of complexion. Every stroke of the stranger's oar, when once Mr. Behringbright had desired Darby O'Finn and his daughter to cease their exertions, brought destiny nearer. But you would have said, from her careless glance and attitude, that Madeleine herself was as little concerned as any other young lady on the lake; nay, she even said, finding no better could be done, "Oh, yes, sir, I don't mind now; I feel quite well again! But what Frenchman do you mean?—one you have some dislike to?"

The intervening throng of boats, which had to be cautiously threaded, in fact gave time for quite a little conver-

sation, and not of a kind calculated to allay anxiety in Miss Graham's bosom.

"The one you told me was engaged to Miss Emily Maughan in Belfast—a fellow who has twice, besides, crossed me in a very uncomfortable manner. Don't you know?"

"Engaged to Emily Maughan! Did I tell you so? No, I think I did not quite say that! I could not, for I did not know! I only thought so from what I had observed—from their way of meeting and going on—that they were in love with each other, and *ought* to be married, perhaps! I should not in the least wonder, indeed, but what, knowing you are here, and having finally made up her mind not to have Lord Glengariff—I suppose because she *dares not*—she has sent him to ask your consent to their union!"

Even as she said so, the conviction smote like a steam-hammer on Madeleine's heart that Camille was on the scene with a far different object. Either he had discovered that she was there, and had come to ascertain and thwart her projects, or—and the thought, in spite of the danger and destruction involved, almost made her burst out laughing—Mr. Behringbright himself was the "representative of Plutus" whom the romantic son of Gaul hoped to render favourable to the happy issue of his love-affair with her!

Perhaps the ludicrousness of the notion supported Madeleine against its associated alarms. But she had all along, in fact, calculated almost with certainty on M. Le Tellier's acquiescence in any plan, even including her loss, which should present the great material advantages to himself she hoped to demonstrate to him in her securing the millionaire. Selfishness seldom estimates adequately the power of that amiable quality in others, and the intenser the selfishness the more liable it is to mistakes of the kind. And now, though sufficiently vain in her own person, Madeleine had not properly estimated the sway of vanity in a French coxcomb. So that her chief alarm at this time related to the unprepared character of the interview about to take place. And the insinuation last hazarded was in-

tended, as much as might be, to remedy this crude state of affairs, on one side at least.

Mr. Behringbright was evidently impressed, though disagreeably, with the suggestion.

"I don't know whether he has come for my consent or not—I don't know that my consent could be needed—I have no species of control over Miss Maughan's wishes or actions; but if the right is conferred on me, I shall be strongly tempted to exercise it in a refusal! The man appears to me a vain insolent strutter, altogether unworthy of any sensible Englishwoman's preference. Full of his nonsensical French notions on every thing. He wanted to fight a duel with me, forsooth—though I never mentioned it before—because I stumbled against him by accident on board that Belfast steamer; and the American who is with him did all he possibly could to keep alive the mischief, and bring the homicidal absurdity to pass between us."

"Oh, what a wretch! How strange! Would Monsieur Le Tellier really have fought you? I did not think he had been such a lion!" said Madeleine; who, in truth, was rather incredulous as to the leonine qualities of her discarded sentimentalist, but managed thus to insinuate rather a pretty compliment.

"Do you think it needs something so ferociously valiant to beard *me*, Miss Graham?" said Mr. Behringbright, smiling. "Well, we shall see; we do not yet know whether these good people's intents are wicked or charitable."

"Oh, I don't believe much in his valour," said Madeleine. "Emily has told me he was quite frightened off when the Misses Sparx threatened to set the police at him, for haunting after our school when we walked out. And Lord Glengariff says that he screamed and squealed out like a child when he threatened in fun to throw him over into the pit that night you rescued him from the mob at the theatre. How curiously you seem always to have been so good to him, and Lord Glengariff to have taken a sort of instinctive dislike to him, from the very first! But you must continue good to him, dear Mr. Brownjohn; and if *we* are to be happy together, let us

try and make poor Emily happy also with the man of her choice!"

The melting expression—the captivating “dear Mr. *Brownjohn*,” which seemed to have forgotten again that it was addressed to a man of money—put Mr. Behringbright in a good humour, and in a position of stability and unsuspecting, as regarded his own affairs, for the approaching interview.

Nor was this altogether a mere vague suggestion. It had crossed Madeleine’s mind of late, not unfrequently, how very convenient it would be—how completely several dangerous implications might be coiled up safely—if Emily *would* marry Camille.

Lord Glengariff was, of course, out of the question: explanations there would be fatal. Not to mention that Miss Graham had a true young-lady feeling in the matter besides, and could not bear the idea of a contemporary securing so much more splendid though not so valuable a prize in the matrimonial lottery. And as Emily must soon be desperate as regarded Mr. Behringbright,—had hopelessly excluded herself from competition with the young earl,—perhaps, rather than sink altogether into old-maidism, she could be brought to think of Camille.

Camille, Madeleine said to herself, was a very handsome and agreeable young man. She knew she had thought so once,—was not certain whether she did not think so still. And a fair pretext would thus arise to secure him—and the friend of her youth—a satisfactory provision from the resources and influence of the millionaire merchant. All would thus be most delightfully dove-tailed—or serpent-tangled—for future intimacy, and a commerce of visits and good offices—a romance of friendly alliance, in which the simple spiritless Emily would play the part of Monsieur Eugène Sue’s *Mathilde* to her own brilliant and gifted *Ursule*, with the difference that all the advantages of fortune and position would be on her side too. Fictitious creations, it would appear, can have their Don Quixotes of imitation in evil as well as good—female as well as male.

Such were the reflections that passed in electric touches

through that rapid intellect, whose powers had been so fearfully misdirected by education and the perverse influences of the organised frenzy miscalled society!

Meanwhile, the Frenchman and American made up to the evident object of pursuit at all the speed a single-masted crazy boat could manage it, through the pressure of the pleasure-seeking fleet, all set in a contrary direction.

Rather, perhaps, against the wish of the former, who observed to his companion, "Yes, yes; I suppose it is he! But, *ma foi!* do you not perceive he has a lady with him? I do not wish to interrupt him at an unpropitious moment. Let us also behold the spectacle, and, satisfied that he is still in the mountains, accost him at a more disengaged instant."

"Pho, pho! there is no moment in all eternity like the present one! Clip its wings if you can! But by all the stars in heaven, and on Ameriky's flag of freedom, don't you see the lady's the one you make such a caterwauling about?—the one we saw on board the Belfast steamer, and you tell such fine stories of, when you have half a rag of a French tatter of liquor in the wind—sitting cheek by jowl with him as friendly as Britannia and Neptune on the price of a wooden leg! And they see us, and don't like the look of us, as sure as my great-grandmother was a red-legged turkey!"

"It is Mr. Behringbright Brothers! That I perfectly perceive. But the other?—the lady? No, it is impossible! I should be certain to know if she had left her father's house: she takes no step without my approbation. Neither was she at all aware I should find myself at Killarney this season; accordingly, she cannot have prepared me a delightful surprise! It is impossible!" returned Camille; for he it was.

"If you don't spy her out and recognise her, it is because you Frenchmen can only see well through an opera-glass. But I *thought* it was all bosh and boast what you said about that 'are out-and-out young *beautier* on board the steamer. You picked her out as the handsomest crittur you saw there, and romanced all the other lies!"

"It is only that I cannot believe my eyes, not that I

do not see her well!" exclaimed the astonished Frenchman, whose orbs of vision were now certainly strained towards the boat containing his lady-love and her elder suitor like those of a boiled crab. "And yet—and yet it *is* Madeleine! With Mr. Behringbright? What a marvellous coincidence!"

"I don't see the wonder myself. It's all just as I told you it would be," returned the American, with a jangling laugh. "Old Moneybags has seen what a pretty girl she is—and she has found out what a rich old churl *he* is. Put those two ideas together, and every thing is accounted for, if you had found them at the end of Rosse's telescope in the moon!"

"Let us verify the fact! Make all possible diligence with your oar, young man, and I promise you a reward," said Camille, now considerably agitated, to the boatman.

"They're not a-moving, your honour; we shall soon be upon them. But I must mind and not get my own nose broken—leastways the boat's—as I did the other day, against a rock, which has rendered her sides rather weak," returned the conscious boatman, who knew that his shallop had only turned out for that gala-day, after lying by disabled for years.

"Don't drown us, certainly," said Camille. "And my feet are already quite wet in your leaky affair!" eyeing his beautifully-polished, high-heeled little boots with dismay.

"You *can't* drown me, Britisher! I'll defy you to it! I can swim like an alligator. I've crossed the Mississippi twice where its cataract thunders into the Oroonoko, swimming without drawing my breath! And I used to regularly slide down Niagara Falls every morning before breakfast for an appetite, while I was at Saratoga!" returned the American.

"Ha! ha! ha! Behold the genius of your country again—colossal in every thing!" complimented Le Tellier.

"Even in *lies*, d'ye mean?" returned Flamingo, rather fiercely and bullily. But by this time they were close on the Behringbright boat.

It will thus be seen that Madeleine was quite right in

her conjecture, funny and improbable as it seemed. She knew, and had often, of latter times, secretly scorned and derided the high-flown sentimentalities and impracticabilities of her French lover. She had heard him more than once labour to persuade her that his and her case almost exactly resembled that of the unfortunate Julie and St. Preux, in the "*Nouvelle Héloïse*;" and what more likely than for him to carry out the romantic delusion, and fancy a *Milor Edouard Bomston* in the Englishman who had rescued him at the playhouse? The resemblance was even sustained by the circumstance of his having almost fought a duel with that generous stranger!

"It is true I have chastised the English insolence, and disregard for the feelings of more susceptible nationalities, in Behringbright Brothers," he remarked to Mr. Flamingo Brown, on the latter accidentally rejoining him in the course of a conjoint commercial movement in Cork, and forcing himself on his confidence. "But the English—admirers always of courage—readily pardon even offences against themselves due to it. Witness that Mr. Behringbright, who takes part with me in a playhouse disturbance against one of his dearest friends! Does not a Britannic poet of celebrity make the remark, 'What we plant, we love to water'? He is immensely rich; *we* are deplorably poor in every thing but love. *Tenez!* he has only to know how to use his wealth to create happiness, and all the world knows he is willing to do it. Veritable son of perfidious but *good-natured* Albion, he has only to know of the misfortunes of two lovers, one of whom is almost indebted to him for his life, who adore each other, and are persecuted by fortune, to fly to their succour!"

Luckily for the private views of the female of this pair of persecuted doves, Camille Le Tellier had been confined to his bed for a day or two by the consequences of the fright he had sustained in the Belfast row. He was very nervous and sensitive, and though he was willing enough to thrust himself into mischief, speedily lost his sage's perpendicular at a much less matter than the heavens crumbling overhead, and the earth rolling away beneath his feet; therefore, his body was not in readiness so soon as his

mind to execute the notable project he very quickly conceived. And Mr. Behringbright had departed on his Killarney trip before—diligently searching him out under his assumed name of Brownjohn—Camille ascertained, by the directions left to forward his letters, he had gone on a visit to Glengariff Castle. By a coincidence very flattering to his hopes, business would also take Le Tellier soon to the south of Ireland, and he determined to avail himself of the opportunity to put this project to the touch. Delayed beyond his expectation in one or two cities, he yet expected to arrive in time on the lakes to overtake a pleasure-seeker, as he supposed Mr. Behringbright to be; and, it would appear, he was not much mistaken.

As for Flamingo Brown, I do not suppose the mere love of mischief would have sufficed to lure so keen a “calkulator” off his proper ground in commercial cities, had he not had a business motive in the transaction.

He had lighted on a speculation recently in which he perceived, to his intense regret, that without the assistance of some great English capitalists he should miss a very nice thing. Behringbright Brothers were of the greatest, and if he could only effect a reconciliation with the head of that firm, all would go well. And so, with immense confidence in his own powers of persuasion and “hocussing” the world in general, and almost as much in the placability and tolerance of the John Bull division of it, Flamingo took up the notion of accompanying his young French friend to Killarney Lakes, and taking a signal part in the projected reconciliation on his own score.

Accordingly, there was a great change to be witnessed in the Yankee’s demeanour on this occasion.

He saluted Mr. Behringbright on approaching with a familiarity which he doubtless intended to efface all recollections of former rudeness. “Mr. Behringbright! this is a lucky chance to meet you here! Out on a little recreation from the desk, I suppose, like your humble servant? Fine country this, isn’t it, on a small scale? Quite remarkable!”

Mr. Behringbright made a very cold reply. “It is not every nation that has a continent to stretch its limbs in—

and not content then, Mr. Brown, or more of you would stay at home! But Miss Graham thought somebody in your boat wished to speak with her, or me, and that is why we stopped. Else she is not well, and wishes to go ashore."

Mr. Behringbright's eye was at the same time fixed with curious—in good truth, with somewhat alarmed attention, on the young Frenchman. Camille had bared his head with national politeness on nearing the boat with the lady in it, but now sat staring with unmistakable signs of wonder and dismay.

On her part, however, that young lady had cordially—but with young ladylike unconcern and indifference—stretched her neatly-gloved little hand—she was very particular in her gloves—towards the French gentleman.

"How are you, Monsieur Le Tellier?" she said, with the prettiest kindness, but with evident distance too, in her manner, and with a smiling indifference and unconsciousness in her eyes that quite petrified him as he met the glance. "Have you left all well in Belfast? I know I must not ask you if you have been in Belhaven Square lately. But how is dear Emily? All well there? At least, 'all's well that ends well' there as elsewhere, I suppose.—Come pleasuring to the lakes, in the hope of finding a certain person at Glengariff again? Well, I hope you will enjoy it more than I do, though uncle was so kind as to bring me on a little fishing turn-out with him. I have been nearly drowned, you know; and the uproar and tumult here to-day are too much for me, and this gentleman is kindly taking me home out of it."

"I should have pleasure, Miss Graham, if ——" stammered Camille; but Madeleine interrupted him, saying, with a significance that required the most delicate modulation not to be appreciated where she did not wish it to be so:

"Oh, no: Mr. Brownjohn is my father's *particular friend*, and does not care for the trouble. And, as I have found out, he is *dear* Emily's particular friend—almost guardian—too: so if you have any thing *to say to me from home*, Mr. Le Tellier, I shall be happy to render you all the service in my power . . . if you call upon us

some time when my uncle is within. We are staying at Prospect Palace, and Dr. Bucktrout is not so nonsensically prejudiced as papa, and will be glad to see you—and so, I am sure, shall I—for dear Emily's sake!"

Camille stared, lost in wonder, but haunted and withheld by confused recollections of the understanding between himself and Madeleine that the name of Emily should be used as a sort of symbolical one of the occult understanding really existing between themselves. In the midst of this confusion, it seemed to him, therefore, that all he needed really attend to was the fact that he was invited to an interview—in which, no doubt, satisfactory explanations would be offered of all that was strange and unaccountable in what he witnessed. Accordingly he bowed deeply, with a graceful cringe *à la Français*, remarking, "I shall be most happy to make the acquaintance of *Miss's uncle*!" and the interview, so far as regarded him, appeared to be over.

Flamingo Brown, however, burst into one of his coarse laughs, and inquired, "And are *you* staying too, Mr. Behringbright, or Brownjohn, or what's your name, my dear sir, at Prospect Palace?"

"Does it concern you to know of my whereabouts, Mr. Brown?" the other replied, with evident dryness and stiffness.

"Yes; I've a first-rate business matter to put before your house—which is as good as reaping gold—when you've time, sir. And this young gentleman, Monsieur *Le Teller*, has also, as he tells me——"

The art of interrupting is a great one. "Monsieur *Le Tellier* can speak English, sir; and this, I believe, is not quite a matter for the open air," exclaimed Madeleine, colouring partly with fear, and partly with indignation at the risks Camille's imprudent confidence seemed now likely to occasion.

Luckily, Mr. Behringbright was on some points not quite a business man. Once deceived, no man ever regained his confidence; whereas a complete man of business expects to be cheated and over-reached sometimes, and readily sacrifices personal resentment to views of profit.

"I have already more than once told you, sir, that I will never again join in any transaction to which you may be a party. And I never will! I beg you to believe me in earnest, without the necessity of going before a magistrate to make an affidavit to the effect," he said.

"What! is it still on about those darned skins?" roared the Yankee. "I wish they were all sunk to the bottom of the sea, for the cursed noise you make about it. And if some score of you cantankerous British capitalists, as you call yourselves, was sewed up in them——"

"Row home, Darby!" said Mr. Behringbright, turning scornfully away.

"To Prospect Palace? Do you reside at Prospect Palace? Shall I find you there?" Monsieur Le Tellier now called out—also in a somewhat menacing and challenging tone.

"Have *you* any particular business with me, sir?" returned Mr. Behringbright.

"Certainly I have, sir."

"Then you will find me—when you want me—at the Red Herring Tavern, a little out of Killarney on the Glengariff Road, where I stay. Or, if the affair is very pressing, you may out with it now, if you please," said the irritated millionaire.

"No, dear sir," interrupted Madeleine, with an expressive gesture to Camille, which he understood as she would have him. "I think I am a little concerned in this. It is not a matter, indeed, for hasty consideration in the open air. And I think I shall prove a better mediator with my father's most esteemed friend than Mr. Brown—or even Monsieur Le Tellier himself—when I am put in proper possession of the facts by and by! And now, sir," she added in a whisper to Mr. Behringbright, which only he could overhear, "do go off now; I really am very faint and ill. And I should not like dear Emily's name to be dragged into discussion before so many listeners."

Tired of the scene himself, Mr. Behringbright readily complied with this intimation—raising his hat civilly, but almost exclusively, to the Frenchman, who responded with

a Parisian flourish. Madeleine smiled at Camille also, as her companion turned to give directions, much more cordially and significantly than before, and with a suitable glance. And away went Darby O'Finn, plying his oars as fast as the fins of a sword-fish, and propelling the boat accordingly, so that Madeleine and Mr. Behringbright speedily disappeared in the distance.

Camille was certainly a little puzzled and annoyed, but not so much, either, as his American friend wished him. For hardly was the manoeuvre described effected than he turned to him, and bursting into a huge coarse cackination, exclaimed, "And that's the young damsel you pretend dotes on you in secret! Very secret indeed; for I'll be sworn on the handsomest-bound British Bible or Peerage you'll produce, she is quite ignorant of it herself, and scarcely knows you from Adam! Or, if she does, has as surely made up her mind to cut you and marry that tough old Dutchman there, as any thing in the multiplication-table!"

"Ah, you injure me by the supposition! It is necessary for her to dissemble always, under witnesses, as I have told you. But you perceived with what art she invited me to an interview and explanations?" replied Camille, but with visibly uneasy query, and self-doubt in his manner.

"You're a gone 'coon if you believe in such sly gammon as that? She only wanted to shuffle you off out of sight of her new prize. Women beat all the eels in creation for slipperiness. You fancy you have them in your basket, and they are a mile off in the mud!" taunted the Yankee. "If you want me to believe you are any thing else but a vain talker and boaster, mounseer, you will do something to let all the world, and Master Pokerback in particular, see she is *yours*, and sha'n't be any body else's! Be hanged, if you don't, if I don't tell the gal herself what fine things you report of her! And I'm much mistaken if she has not such a spice of the devil in her as will season your pottage for you many a day after the diskivery!"

Camille turned rather pale. "I have long thought it might be a necessary step," he replied: "otherwise I do

not see how it is possible to extort the consent of her wealthy family. But, as you say, I shudder when I consider the consequences of offending a woman of so much spirit and determination. Nevertheless, if I imagined myself made the sport of a perfidy truly so monstrous and **unexplicable**, except on the least worthy supposition, I also am capable of great things! I also understand the meaning of the word VENGEANCE!"

"I'll tell you how you can let her understand she is not to make such a complete ass of you—that she is known to be compromised with you, and can't use you as a stepping-stone to her millionaire! *Send me as your friend* to ask these promised explanations of her. That will settle her feathers to the right speckle, you may depend upon it; and I'll bring you a *krect* report of the situation, which you would never see with your own eyes, under such blinkers as she'll clap at once on your head, I'll wager any number of Connecticut razors against a grindstone!"

"*Tenez!* It is not a bad idea—and you shall be satisfied of the verity of the revelations I have confided to your friendship, Mr. Brown! As for your own sagacity, it is beyond dispute. Well, we will see—we will see! Give me an interval for reflection. In truth, it is advisable to reflect with great maturity of judgment before compromising one's self in the relations that may exist between me and a woman like *Mees Madeleine Graham!*"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BREAKERS AHEAD.

MEANWHILE, escaped by her great presence of mind and coolness from immediate danger, but thoroughly aware that it was only a temporary security unless she could strike in some closer rivets, Miss Graham and her convoy landed safely, traversed the neatly laid-out walks of myrtle and arbutus between the Upper Lake and Prospect Palace, and, arm-in-arm, entered that excellent hotel. But, acquainted with the niceties of her lover's humour, the

young lady by no means invited him up to her uncle's private apartments ; informing a waiter—whom they surprised draining a lot of bottles, which had contained various liquids, into his mouth, on a landing-place—that they wished to be shown into the public-room. Still, as there was nobody there, every body being abroad at the stag-hunt, indecorum was saved, and one place was just as suitable for the purpose as another for the nonce.

In this seclusion, of course, Mr. Behringbright could do no less than renew, in fuller and more unmistakable terms—if that were possible—his offer of marriage, his assurances of love and devotion, and of his perfect ability to *keep a wife*,—not only in comfort and ease, but in the utmost splendour of affluence and luxury.

Now, as has been previously remarked, Mr. Behringbright was not naturally eloquent except on business matters. I am of opinion, indeed, that his ideas were seldom particularly worth clothing in the magnificences of expression, excepting in business matters ; and there brocade was superfluous, and he certainly never used it. He came rather an unpractised hand to the kind of work therefore : and Madeleine herself frequently smiled in secret at the contrast of her Anglo-Dutchman's modest and sober style of wooing, with the flighty exaltations and sentimentalities of her French lover,—which, however, interpreted themselves into something very different in practice. But the finest flowers of Parisian rhetoric shrunk into very poor weeds indeed in comparison with the glitter and glow of a British *sovereign-tree* in full bearing. And Apollo himself might have warbled to his lute on one side, while Madeleine would have turned to the other to hear that she should do what she liked with a *million of money* !

With or without eloquence, every thing was arranged to the satisfaction of the parties in this memorable interview ; and what could Demosthenes and Cicero, and Pitt and Fox, all thundering together, have effected more ?

It was agreed, that from their first meeting on board the Belfast steamer to that moment, Madeleine Graham and her now accepted suitor had felt an irresistible liking

towards each other—combated on the one side only by apprehension that it was impossible he could achieve so charming and youthful a creature's personal regard, without which Mr. Behringbright declared he should never have entertained the idea of recommending himself to her favour; on the other, by the belief that Mr. Brownjohn's condition, as a mere travelling commercial agent, would preclude the hope of a union with the consent of Miss Graham's parents, without which that dutiful child could never think of marriage. Nay, Mr. Behringbright had almost, in the overflow of his heart, proclaimed his conviction that he had fallen in love with his adored long previously, on an occasion not likely to have escaped the reader's memory. But the delicate associations of that circumstance restrained him, and, greatly to Madeleine's own satisfaction, he reserved the avowal for another time. Still, the main preliminaries were accepted as proven; and it followed, as a matter of course, that Mr. Behringbright now announced his determination to lose no time in making his real rank and position known to Sir Orange and Lady Graham, and asking at their hands the greatest blessing mortal man can ask of Heaven—a loving, beautiful, and virtuous wife!

Madeleine's mind ran all the time, meanwhile, how to secure her rear as well as to advance her main battle in the success thus far achieved. A grand object was to prevent all danger of a premature interview between her late and present favoured lovers. Considerable risk, it was evident, existed.

It was not enough that she obtained a promise from Mr. Behringbright to make his pretensions known at once to her uncle and aunt, and to accompany her, as speedily as she could herself arrange, home to Belfast, to ask her father's consent, and complete the whole happy arrangement. An untutored expression from Camille—the exposition of romantic hopes he meditated—would be sufficient to topple down the whole castle of cards. And his wonder and anxiety were evidently awakened, and might throw him at once on some imprudent demonstration.

Madeleine bethought herself of a plan.

In the midst of the interchange of tender assurances and vows, a shadow came over her bright expression. "But Lord Glengariff," she exclaimed. "Oh, *poor* Lord Glengariff! what will he think of our behaviour to him to-day, dear Mr. Behringbright? So rude, so very unkind, when he had contrived it all to do me pleasure and honour! And he saved my life too! Oh, dear sir, nothing but the knowledge of our feelings towards each other—of how we stand towards each other—now can excuse us. Do let him know it all at once."

"But Lord Glengariff will not be much comforted by the information, Madeleine dearest, since it is so evident he was courting you for himself!" the accepted suitor replied, struck almost with a feeling of incredulity at his own good fortune as he said so.

"Oh, no, it was all nonsense—merely something to amuse away his vexation at Emily Maughan's preference for another—for that Frenchman we saw to-day," returned Madeleine; and she believed herself, and spoke as if she did. "I am sure his lordship will be quite happy to hear that we are engaged to each other, for don't be angry, dearest, it is not many days ago since he as good as warned me to beware of your designs upon me, and expressed his fears, which puzzled me amazingly at the time, that your intentions were not honourable. Nobody knows what he will think or say now unless you undeceive him. He may, perhaps, do or say something on the provocation that may disturb your friendly relations for life; and I am sure his poor mother has trouble enough already. But what I am thinking of more than any thing besides is this, that if he comes to Killarney and finds this Frenchman here, he will immediately suspect his business with you; and he being such a passionate young man, and the other, you say, a professed duellist, they are certain to run their heads against each other, and something horribly stupid will happen in the fighting way. Don't you think so?"

"It is not unlikely," said Mr. Behringbright, considerably struck with this very natural apprehension, and not ill-pleased with the assurance presented of Lord Glengariff's

real motives in his recent conduct. "But what can I do to prevent it?"

"Go at once to Glengariff—at least, as soon as the sport on the lake is over, and it cannot last much longer now—and explain all, and induce him to remain there. Meanwhile, uncle and I will persuade Monsieur Le Tellier that he cannot leave his cause in better hands than ours to plead with you; for I am all but certain he has come to beg your assistance in establishing them together in life—which I think you will allow me to promise him?—and get him to go on his affairs away from here, until we can settle the affair to every body's mind. Emily's mother must be asked, and all that, you know. And besides, dear Mr. Behringbright!—after what has occurred so publicly . . . it would be best . . . it would be proper . . . " (and there she blushed very naturally), "that you should stay away from me a little while—should not, at least, be found with me alone when people come back . . . And hark! now I think by the shouts the poor stag must be taking to the water, and it must be soon over with it there, among such a lot of brutes in the boats to drive it back upon the dogs!"

Mr. Behringbright glanced from the lofty windows—which he had thrown open to give his siren air—and was so particularly struck by what he then witnessed of the spectacle enacting on the watery expanse below, that he even arose, from his almost adoring attitude beside the young beauty, to gaze forward and consider it.

The windows of the principal public room at Prospect Palace, where the loving pair had found refuge, overlooked—for good eyes—the entire Lower Lake. You could see as far as where the shores narrowed in to form the peninsula of Muckross, and the close rocky channel between its jutting headland and the mountains descending from the Gap of Dunloe on the left.

This scene had now in itself reached an extraordinary effulgence of beauty under the meridian glories of the sun, which made the whole lake shine like a sheet of silver set in a frame of the intensest cerulean blue. All the primitive colours seemed, in fact, displayed, as in some vast

cut glass, through the watery atmosphere. Innisfallen Island glowed like a great emerald filigreed with its woods in the midst of the lake, and the mountains exhibited an almost infinite variety of shades on their sides and summits, from the brightest pea-green to the saddest purple. But, in addition, these natural splendours were animated by the sparkle of a thousand oars, the flutter of a thousand particoloured flags, the rapid movement of the entire flotilla of boats, which Mr. Behringbright perceived was converging with great rapidity towards the Toomies shore. But this was not what so particularly attracted his attention; which was that, at the very moment he looked towards the spectacle, what he perceived, even at that distance, to be Lord Glengariff's barge, rowed right across the line of view, and the branching head of a stag appeared fuming with terror, and blowing the water up in a foam beyond it.

Mr. Behringbright knew that it was considered very dangerous to cross the way of one of those powerful animals when driven to frenzy and desperation—as the stag always is when it betakes itself in flight to so uncongenial an element. He looked, therefore, to see the barge recede, so as to allow the maddened creature to pass. But his attention was riveted by seeing that, far from this being the case, a figure standing upright in the boat seemed, by its impatient gestures, to urge the rowers right on the animal's advance. And he recognised this figure to be Lord Glengariff, by the gleam of a hunting-knife in his hand, which he remembered he carried, as a part of his chieftain's costume, sheathed in his girdle, just as Madeleine, who had also risen, exclaimed—

“Dear me! I hope his lordship is not going to be so foolish! He told me he would kill the stag himself—to show me that there was something money could not enable a man to do—and send me the antlers as a trophy. Ah! what has happened there?”

What had happened? At that great distance it was impossible to discern distinctly, but something of a strange and horrible nature seemed to occur. A dreadful cry of dismay came audibly to land—a movement of infinite

uproar and confusion took place around the barge ; after which, the whole sweep of boats behind it seemed to open and scud off in all directions, as if in the wildest consternation ! The cries of alarm were redoubled ; and a moment after, the branches of the stag appeared rising nearer in the waters, as if from beneath the Glengariff barge, and making towards the opposite shore !

Mr. Behringbright snatched up a telescope—part of the furniture of the apartment.

“The creature’s throat is cut !” he exclaimed. “Glengariff has fulfilled his boast—the waves crimson every time the poor beast breasts them !”

“But where is Glengariff himself ? Does not something seem wrong there in the barge ?” inquired Madeleine.

“There ! it makes its last leap—and sinks ! They will have to drag for the antlers ! What a strange gift to make to a lady !” said Mr. Behringbright.

“But don’t you really think there’s something amiss in the Glengariff barge ? I don’t see Lord Glengariff now ; and how they all seem clustered round something lying on the gunwale !” persisted Madeleine.

The telescope was readjusted. “It does seem rather queer indeed !” said Mr. Behringbright, greatly disturbed. “Whatever can it mean ?—Waiter ! come here !—But it seems all right again ; they are rowing towards Glengariff. No, they are not ! They all of them seem quite busy round some one lying down in the boat.—Rooney, what is the meaning of all this ?”

The waiter, who had been draining the bottles, himself attracted by the uproar, now approached the window, and, privileged by Mr. Behringbright’s handing him the telescope, immediately delivered an authoritative dictum—

“Some *acshident* I should say, sir, for sartin, sure-ly ! Those craturs are worse than mad bulls when their horns are hot ! I hope it isn’t his lordship, The O’Donoghue, come to grief, though he’s so venturesome, or the murther’s out about the wailing of the banshee which the Princess has been hearing this month past, they say !”

“I hope not, indeed !” said Mr. Behringbright, turning very pale.

"My uncle is on board, and—and may be useful!" murmured Madeleine. "Indeed, I almost think that he's binding something—it almost seems like a strip of sail—round something. But they are rowing back to Glengarriff—I should think *all* must be right."

"Here's a boat making shore as fast as she can; perhaps she may know," suggested the waiter.

"Run and ask!—lose not a moment!" exclaimed Mr. Behringbright.

The man disappeared, and they speedily discerned him running down the walk to the landing-place. A painful pause then ensued—such a pause as the mind instinctively discerns precedes some thunderclap of evil tidings.

Unluckily, Rooney's careful clearance of the bottles had disqualified him for immediate rapid motion. He proceeded on his mission in a very strange sort of a zigzag—stumbled more than once; and the general consequence was that Mr. Behringbright, losing patience, was about to take the road for information in person, when Madeleine caught him by the arm, and begged him, in accents he could not but feel irresistible, not to leave her.

"I am so agitated! I am sure something dreadful has happened! Do, Mr. Behringbright, stay—if I am to depend upon you for my future protection and support!"

The truth is, she had discerned that the approaching boat conveyed Camille Le Tellier and his American friend.

She did really look very ill and terrified, as she had reason; and, deeply touched with pity and love, Mr. Behringbright drew his arm round her waist, and supported her back to her chair.

"What is there in the whole world of worth or value to be compared with my dearest girl?" said Mr. Behringbright, in the tenderest words he had, perhaps, ever before used to mortal woman—so the reader may judge he was no great matter of a love-speechifier. But there was more real and genuine passion in the words than in the flightiest ebullition, perchance, of the gallant lady-killing Camille; and, quite vanquished by the overmastering sentiment that swelled in his honest heart, he drew Madeleine fondly to his breast, and imprinted his first kiss of love upon her

pale and trembling lips, precisely at the moment when a stranger entered the apartment, whose long legs and rapid stride had distanced all heralding from the landing-place.

It was Flamingo Brown! but, luckily, Flamingo Brown alone.

Something resembling that snarl of the hyena which some naturalists will have it is a laugh burst from Mr. Brown—and it was plain *that he had seen what he had seen*.

Mr. Behringbright looked confused, but also angry. Madeleine, for a moment, thought that all was lost; but seeing the man alone, she instantly resumed courage.

“Has something happened of an unpleasant nature on the water, sir?” she inquired, trying to look no more concerned than any other young lady in such a position—and succeeding.

“Rather—a few—not quite so pleasant as on land, I guess, miss!” Flamingo replied, with another odious laugh. “But it’s no business of mine, that I know of—as yet; so don’t look such thunders at me, Mr. Behringbright! I’ve not come here on my own hook, but another party’s Miss, if you please——”

“What does the fellow mean?” inquired the millionaire, with a stern glare at the intruder.

“Perhaps I’ll tell you, but not at present; by and by, when I know better myself! Meanwhile, this here room is for public enjoyment, I’m given to understand, and all the big looks of all the capitalists in the world sha’n’t turn me out of it. All I want is to speak with miss in private, if she pleases, on a little matter of business, which won’t keep very long—if she’s of opinion she can do me the honour!”

“It is on his friend’s affair, I suppose, Mr. Behringbright. I will speak with Mr. Brown in private, please—if you give me leave,” said Madeleine, in great distress both in appearance and in reality. And indeed, in spite of all her skill in management, her affairs were getting into a very uncomfortable imbroglio, and were likely to become more complicated still—Mr. Behringbright turning with a very fierce and restive look on Flamingo—when the waiter

staggered in to the relief, like a proper *Deus ex machinâ*, supposing the *Deus* to be a Bacchus.

"Lord preserve us! Such news—such news, sir!"

"What news?—what is the matter, man?"

"The O'Donoghue's fairly kilt and murdered itself entirely! The stag's gored him in the breast, and he was as good as dead and buried before they brought him to land, and the scrame of the banshee is out!"

"Good heavens!"

"Wal, I heard there was somebody hurt—not killed out-and-out. But who's *The O'Donachoo*?—what's the meaning of a name like that, with a *The* before it?" said Flamingo, staring with all his yellow bloodshot eyes.

"It is Lord Glengariff!—Oh, go and see what is the matter! Take surgeons, Mr. Behringbright! No, you shall not go by water.—Rooney, a jaunting-car instantly. You will have to go round by Killarney for the doctors!"

Madeleine really was shocked, and indeed horrified, by the sudden intelligence; but she did not forget the advisability of keeping Mr. Behringbright out of the way of Camille, in case he should be remaining any where near in his boat.

Mr. Behringbright's mind was, however, too much taken up by these disastrous tidings to attend to much else.

"Thank you, dearest!—A car, Rooney, as fast as you can;—a guinea if you're ready in five minutes!—Good God! what a calamity! His mother will not survive the shock! I will send you word instantly, dear Miss Graham, of what has happened. Meanwhile, go to your own apartment, and save yourself from vulgar intrusion."

"It is *for Emily's sake*," murmured Madeleine. "I shall be quite safe. Look, every body is coming back! But every moment may be of value to save that good generous young man who saved my life! Do go—do go!"

Mr. Behringbright was too much stricken with apprehension himself to delay an unnecessary moment, and complied, with a warm pressure of his betrothed's hand defiantly to his heart, while Flamingo Brown looked on with a jeering scowl.

Madeleine, however, would not suffer him to leave until Rooney reëntered, breathless, to announce that there was a conveyance ready at the hotel door, with their best horse—leastways, mare—Flyaway Jib, “in the ropes.” For the phraseology of the good old times of Ireland survived in the common speech of the ostlery, though leather harness had long since superseded the former approved Celtic style of tackling in the shafts.

She even saw Mr. Behringbright down the hotel stairs, and safely upon the conveyance; then she turned, and bravely and unquaveringly reëntered the apartment she had left, to face this impudent intruder, in whom she instinctively recognised a foe. But in spite of all his uncomfortable craft and insolence, she felt herself a match for him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LOVE-LETTERS.

THERE can be no doubt, I think, that Madeleine Graham exhibited as much courage and presence of mind in the conduct of her affairs as the great heroes are lauded for exhibiting in theirs. Unforeseen contingencies mostly found her alert and confident, full of resource and stratagem. No spider ever spun finer webs than some of her contrivances, nor ever repaired a damage or a rent with more rapid ingenuity and rally of effort than she. I like to praise her when I can; and I must say that, in so very alarming a twist and dislocation as her schemes had now sustained, she behaved well.

She found Mr. Brown not unpleasantly engaged in emptying the decanter of sherry unbottled for her revival, but scarcely touched, into his second tumbler, and frothing it up with water.

“Beg pardon, miss. I’ve ordered a cocktail on my own account; but I’m as dry as an old bee-hive; and rather than split altogether, while the fellow takes such a

confounded time, I thought I'd venture on the liberty of your bottle," Mr. Brown observed.

Miss Graham accepted the excuse with great amenity.

"You are perfectly welcome, sir; pray take a seat. As a friend of the gentleman whom I am so desirous of serving, for the sake of the dearest friend I have in the world, I shall be most happy if you will be pleased to make yourself perfectly at home." And this was said with a frank sweet smile, which, on so beautiful a face, produced its effect even on the obtuse perceptions of Mr. Flamingo Brown. But he thought it necessary too to vindicate his proper national swagger and insolence in his reply.

"I'm much obliged, I'm sure; but there's no occasion to tell me to make myself at home in a *hottel*. I always *am* at home in a *hottel*; in fact, I never live in any thing else *when* I'm at home. You've heard, I daresay, how we all live in *hottels* in Ameriky—man, woman, and child, and find it pay better than each sulking in a hole by himself, as you continue to do in the old country here. However, I say nothing against that; it is the land of my forebears, and I have a respect for it and its institutions, however much they differ from more enlightened nations, according-ly."

"Of your *forebears*, sir!" said Madeleine, who had never heard this singular word before; but it is good American for ancestors. And the American himself, be sure, was quite guiltless of the species of sarcasm he fancied he now detected in the young lady's repetition of the word.

"Oh, I'm a *bear*, am I? Wal, I calculate, the more I *bear* the more I may *bear*!" he answered, very testily. "However, miss, it would, perhaps, be as well if people who are so particular in their language were equal so in their doings!—What I say I mean; so you need not look so contemptible-like at *me*!"

"Really, Mr. Brown, I do not know what you mean—I am merely looking at you for an explanation. I understood you to bring some message to me from a foreign gentleman, who requests my interference in an affair of great personal interest to himself, and is aware that he's

not regarded with any very great favour by the elder members of my family."

"And you was quite right too about its concerning also the dearest friend you have in the world. Miss, every body knows who every body's *dearest friend* is! Your *own self*, I fancy, as much with you as with me; and any other person of good sense and calculating powers."

"I spoke of another person in this instance, Mr. Brown—a young lady, a schoolfellow and beloved inmate in my father's family at present," returned the brave Madeleine, eyeing the messenger with well-dissembled alarm and visible query.

"But no other will serve the turn in this instance, Miss Graham," was the stunning rejoinder. "For I have Mounseer Le Tellier's *positive orders and commands* to you to join him at once at the *Red Herring Tavern*, where he's gone himself there to await Mr. Behringbright's arrival, and back the application he has come—I don't know how far out of the reg'lar way of business—to address to him. And he said you wouldn't *dare* to refuse. And by your look this blessed moment I am quite of the opinion you won't."

No doubt Miss Graham did look a little taken aback, a little astonished—a little thunderstruck, perhaps—if that experience admits of degrees—as she heard the words.

Ordered—commanded, by a young Frenchman, to join him at a low outlying tavern, to back an "application," of what nature could not be doubted, to Mr. Behringbright—to that million of money she had with so much difficulty got at last within her reach—not clutch. Exposure, destruction—what else could be expected to ensue?

Nay, were they not already completed in the delivery of such a message by a man who, remembering the recent wrangle, Madeleine had reason to think had motives to do or say any thing he believed could annoy Mr. Behringbright.

She must ascertain that point at once. All aglow in her secret heart with indignation, but speaking with outward composure, she inquired, "Has Monsieur Le Tellier then made *you*—a perfect stranger to most of the parties,

I imagine—a confidant of his design, whatever it may be?”

Flamingo in his turn was rather taken off his hinges by the point-blank directness of the question. He remembered that his friend had most earnestly urged upon him not to provoke the young lady by any intimation that *he* had betrayed the secret of the forbidden intimacy between them; much less the hints he had so incautiously thrown out, under the influence of vanity and the Yankee's sneering incredulity, of the resistless quality of the influence he possessed over her. Flamingo was even startled by the glance that accompanied the query, and vaguely roused to the notion that, in truth, he was setting his own foot on a somewhat dangerous movement in the grass.

“No, ma'am, Mr. Le Tellier has not!” he answered, rather shrinkingly. “Mr. Le Tellier is too much the gentleman, I should say, to *kiss and tell*; but he seemed to think, whatever he wanted to do or get done with Mr. Behringbright, you was the party to lend the stoutest pull at the ropes. For there can be no doubt, in the almighty framework of things” [he concluded, with a smile of some grim humour], “that you have a pretty considerable say there—in the proper quarter, I mean—for what mounseer wants.”

There was no mistaking this innuendo; nor had Madeleine a shadow of hope that Mr. Brown had missed espying her in the embrace of her newly-betrothed suitor. Horribly vexatious, no doubt, this was; but it was a *fait accompli*. The whole consideration, however, suggested quite a bright expedient to her quick invention.

“It is true,” she answered, without a ruffle on her brow or lip, that “I *have* a good deal of influence with Mr. Behringbright. Both my unfortunate friend and Monsieur Le Tellier are perfectly aware of that fact, in soliciting its exertion. And I am anxious to use it *always* to a good purpose: for example, Mr. Brown, if I could do any thing to heal the little breach of friendly feeling which seems to have taken place between yourself and Mr. Behringbright, I should have very great pleasure in so doing; particularly after what I heard you observe, that upon

some trifling pique, in the transactions you have been engaged in together, Mr. Behringbright is about to throw away some exceedingly lucrative prospects of investment in your power to suggest."

"And so I did. Hog and heaven! I never heard such a sensible woman talk before!" exclaimed the Yankee, wise as he was in his generation—knowing as he deemed himself in the ways of women, on the strength of one widowing and three divorces in his native land. "By jingo, you're a real Christian, ma'am! And the first duty of that kind of crittur, I have always heard, was to make peace wherever people are at loggerheads; and the way to do that isn't by pitting them together, sure and certain, but putting them in a common notion of something lucrative in the way of business. That's what keeps us and the old country always only a-snarling and growling, but never coming to regular clawing and tearing. Jest you bring about a reconci-liation between me and the great capitalist, and be hanged if I won't make it well worth your while, miss, and I'll never make another stroke in the way of mischief about that Frenchman, s'help me! He's nothing to me; in fact, I would as soon, or sooner, punch his head as not. And he deserves it too, for the way he speaks about young ladies that probably have no more to do with him than Mother Eve. But these handsome finical beggars do sometimes get up a lady's sleeve before she has the sense to shake 'em out; and he has boasted you *must* come if he sent for you, and appointed me to bring you, as reg'lar as if I was execution-sheriff, safely to the spot. But I hope I can keep a secret, if I see no reason to the contrary."

A feeling of intense vexation and resentment kindled in Madeleine's inmost heart as she listened to this confirmation of her fears, and arrived at the conviction that, in spite of her requests and Le Tellier's solemnly-plighted word, he had gratified his own vanity so unfairly at the expense of hers—perhaps had fatally compromised her reputation with this meddling and audacious stranger. Indeed, in spite of his disclaimers, she saw enough almost to convince her on this point in the malicious humour of

the expression that shone on all the long hard lines of Flamingo Brown's physiognomy.

Still he was a stranger, and might be got rid of, she mused, if well managed, without any ruinous results to Camille's imprudence. It was worth while meantime to try what effrontery and resolution might effect in the way of removing or shaking his opinion, however formed or to what extent.

"Monsieur Le Tellier did not boast without reason, absolutely," she remarked, with a purposely audible sigh. "Nay, it is certain that he possesses a cruelly irresistible sway over all who cherish the unfortunate young lady whose confidence he has so shamefully—what was I about to say? No matter; I am quite ready to obey Monsieur Le Tellier's summons, and will thankfully accept so respectable an escort as is offered me to the place where he assigns me the rendezvous; which, as the abode of Mr. Behringbright, must also be of the highest respectability."

"Yes, miss, I *am* respectable, and I am proud of the remark," returned the beguiled Flamingo, eagerly rising. "But I am not so sure of the respectability of the quarters we're a-going to. I hear it's a kind of inferior lodging-house and tea-gardens, and that sort of thing. And if you thought Mr. Behringbright wouldn't like you to go there, why, I'll go back and tell Frenchy so, and advise him to study manners better than to ask a lady to such an ass-ignation."

Madeleine had thought only at the moment how extremely desirable it would be to open an understanding with her rash lover, who seemed so likely to spoil every thing by his interference, while she knew that Mr. Behringbright was at a distance. But this last broadly-pronounced word startled her. She felt she was placing herself in Flamingo Brown's power, as well as being placed so by Camille's rashness; for she could not possibly pretend to Mr. Behringbright that she expected to find *him* at the "Red Herring," after just parting with him on an errand of life or death in another direction.

An intricate problem, therefore, presented itself for solution—How to conciliate the imprudent Frenchman

by a seeming assent to his demand, without any real compliance; boldly confront the suspicions of the American; and secure herself at the same time the chance of a private interview with Camille, which should remove the stumbling-blocks from her path, by the unconscious co-operation of his deleterious agent.

This was how she worked it out:—

“Oh yes, my dear sir, I had forgotten. Mr. Behringbright *would* be surprised if I went to any out-of-the-way place like that in his absence; though Monsieur Le Tellier, of course, cannot know that he is not likely to return to his lodgings, if at all to-night, till late. But you can tell him from me—if, as I suspect but too strongly, his business admits of no delay—I will with pleasure cross the water with him at once to Glengariff. My aunt and uncle are there—and I owe it to the unfortunate young nobleman, the owner, to make the most friendly inquiries after his late accident. There is still plenty of the day left for the excursion—or we can go round by the land, if you would prefer it, to save time, in a car, and take up Monsieur Le Tellier on the way? It is a beautiful drive—and uncle and aunt can come home with me. So you will now be convinced, I hope, Mr. Brown, that I am not afraid to present myself, with this French gentleman in my company, to Mr. Behringbright?”

The American did seem now fairly nonplussed.

Assuredly he had seen with his own eyes a passage of lovemaking which, coupled with the probabilities of the case, made him conclude Camille's boasted secret betrothed was devoting her energies to secure the more valuable prize. But how was he to reconcile this readiness to comply with what he knew to be Le Tellier's purpose in the interview thus assented to, with the Frenchman's declarations?—ignorant, as the luckless boaster had of course left him, of the facts that rendered it very unlikely he should take upon him to present himself in such a season of disorder in the house of a man who had treated him with public insult and injury?

“Why,” Flamingo burst out, staring in amazement at the young lady, “aren't you the main party yourself, and

the one that he's going to ask Mr. Behringbright to let him marry, in spite of all her relations—like Romeo and Juliet?"

It was plain what Camille had been at now! But Madeleine was further than ever from losing her head in this new whirl of the waters round her unsteady stepping-stones.

"Are you crazy, sir, or is Mr. Le Tellier?" she exclaimed, as greatly puzzled. "You have seen how Mr. Behringbright and I are situated, or may guess! But what has he got to do with disposing of me in marriage, supposing he himself has no pretensions that way with me? I do not know, in short, whether it is your own misapprehension, or whether the young gentleman has purposely mystified you; but I am entirely ignorant of what you allude to, with the exception that I have promised to interest myself as much as I can to bring about the possibility of a union between Monsieur Le Tellier and a governess who resides in my father's family, of whom Mr. Behringbright has charitably constituted himself the protector. In this view I am perfectly willing, as I have said, to accompany you on your return to your friend, and proceed with him to Glengariff Castle."

"Wal, this does flog Barnum!—The impudent little French humbug! I wonder where he spied a slate off my roof, that he dared to let daylight into me through a cracked pane!" exclaimed Flamingo. "All his French bantam strutting, I suppose. Be darned if I don't go back and give him a good rubbing down with an oak towel, for sending me on a fool's errand! And yet didn't he tell me—yes, by Jupiter! he *did* tell me—that he had scores on scores of *letters* from you, which he could show to prove *every thing*, in case you stuck up your back! —EVERY THING, I say; and he seemed to mean a good deal by *every thing*, from the way he said it! Every thing! if you dared to play him any tricks with any body—if they were kings upon their golden thrones, or had California ready to settle on you for pin-money!"

Now, indeed—and for almost the first time since the

commencement of this startling interview—Madeleine felt the palsyng touch of fear!

Letters—letters from her—her letters—to Camille Le Tellier!

Now, it must be confessed that, at the very best, love-letters are seldom a species of composition the writers, after the lapse of the Horatian interval, would willingly submit to the public approbation. There is apt to be a good deal in them of superfluous flight and fancy, which a taste sobered and chastened by time—or the possession of the beloved object—is apt to discover most absurdly exaggerated and out of all rational keeping. But without looking through the judicious lenses of time, Madeleine Graham knew very well that her letters were not of the kind to court a dispassionate inspection.

Certain it was, at all events, that no other man in the world, save him alone to whom those amatory effusions were addressed, could ever take Madeleine Graham to his heart without the consciousness that he was hugging disgrace and dishonour of the deepest dye. As for the honest-minded, sober-hearted George Cocker Behringbright, had he himself been the object of such an idolatry, he would have loathed and rejected it as the pure, grassy-breathed ox-god of India would turn with loathing and abhorrence from a sanguinary fetish of Dahomey offered in his honour. But what judgment would he form upon such compositions when he *was not*? And, of course, the grand danger of these letters lay in their capability of being submitted to *his* perusal.

These were reflections which, flashing with much greater rapidity than pen and ink can hope to photograph through Madeleine Graham's mind, did certainly give an unwonted quiver to her heart, and sent the blood blanched downward from her rich complexion.

This was fear. But another sensation almost as instantly started, like a plague-spot of fire, in her inmost soul; and could Camille Le Tellier's feeble and much less harmful nature have appreciated how that first glow of resentment would spread in such a nature, he would have been a good deal more afraid than he had actually shown

himself to offend his lady-love in so unhandsome a guise. For, after all, Madeleine was in the right to feel very much hurt and injured in the situation in which she was cast by Camille's vaunts and threats to this uncomfortable American stranger. Assuredly, honour should not be confined exclusively to the thieves of men's goods and chattels, and even such lovers have a right to expect a little among themselves!

What could she say or do in such an emergency?

I have noticed that people of matured wisdom and experience mostly say nothing when they don't know what to say. Young beginners, however,—especially of the feminine sex,—frequently do exactly the contrary. Still, it can hardly be said Madeleine was betrayed into any very signal imprudence when, after a moment's pause, she exclaimed,—

"Letters!—letters of *mine*? They must be solely relating, then, to Monsieur Le Tellier and Miss Maughan's unhappy affair, in which I now almost regret to say I have interested myself long and rashly enough. But did he pretend to have any such proofs—such documents, I mean—of my complicity in so unhappy a love-affair amongst his travelling paraphernalia? He easily might, for they must be very few—if any at all."

"He had a good large portmanteau with him, but I thought it was filled chiefly with French fal-lals and perfumery," said Mr. Brown.

"Most likely so, sir. And has he gone to lodge with his portmanteau at the 'Red Herring'?"

"So he told me—that he might be sure not to miss Mr. Behringbright. But I don't think he is over flush of cash, either, for the great *ho-tels*, as you call them, over here."

Madeleine ruminated. Could Camille possibly have those letters in conveyance about with him, so numerous as they were? If so, it must be with a purpose. And she felt herself utterly in his power indeed! In the power of a man who had evidently so far, in mere vanity and inconsiderateness, placed so much of the vital secret of her existence at the mercy of a stranger!

Madeleine thereupon felt like one who has walked asleep to the verge of a precipice, starting awake! Oh me! the horrible sea that churned below among the black spiky rocks!—the hideous gulfs of air that alone intervened! Even her clear brain grew dizzy, and reeled at the thought of so horribly pressing and near a destruction. Flamingo himself stared at the look of far-searching vacancy of terror she gave at him.

“Mercy on me, miss!” he exclaimed. “But you *don’t* seem to like it now! For my part, I daresay it’s all the fellow’s talk. And if you say half a word, I’ll make him *prove* his words—or pull his nose for him and make him eat them.”

“I am sure I am much obliged to you, and I will endeavour to prove myself worthy of so kind a friend,” said Madeleine, extending her small and prettily-jewelled hand to the vast paw of the American. “But,” she resumed, with a great appearance of dignified composure and disdain, “I have resolved on quite a different course. Since Monsieur Le Tellier presumes to speak of me in so improper a manner, I will take no further notice of him or his affairs. Let him do his best or his worst—I defy and challenge him to it! I will return no answer whatever to his pretended commands. And if you are so kindly friendly towards me as you declare yourself, Mr. Brown, you will leave him to amuse the time till Mr. Behringbright’s return, as he best may, and remain to partake of the excellent dinner our host will not fail to place before his company to-day.”

“Is it an invite, miss?—and am I to consider myself Mr. Behringbright’s guest or yours?” said the Yankee, with a hungry clash of his ogrelike teeth.

“As my uncle’s, sir. But I shall be happy to testify to Mr. Behringbright my opinion of the politeness and good feeling you have evinced in placing Monsieur Le Tellier’s wishes in the least impudent and disadvantageous manner before me,” said Madeleine. “In fact,” she added, with a fascinating expression not altogether lost on the recipient, “if I take any further interest in the matter, it will be because I desire to do honour to the zeal and elo-

quence of your advocacy of your imprudent friend's objects. Shall I desire the waiter to place a cover for you, Mr. Brown?"

"But you are not *afraid* to write a few lines in answer, are you, miss, that in case of Mr. Le Tellier's obstinacy I may ask to compare them with the letters he pretends to have?" said Flamingo, who spied his advantages in that direction.

A most disagreeable and involving demand, in good sooth! But it would not do to hesitate.

"Certainly not," Madeleine answered. "I have no fear to let my handwriting be compared with any other, and I will write a proper answer to the French gentleman in your presence. Compare my writing when you like and with what you like.—Rooney, an inkstandish and paper, if you please."

The waiter, who was getting better of his bottle-ends after a dose on the staircase, obeyed pretty promptly, and Madeleine seated herself with seeming indifference but much secret agitation to her task.

She certainly did not intend to put a specimen of penmanship in her own real handwriting on record. One may easily deny any other, provided the internal evidence is not too strong. Mr. Behringbright had never yet seen the genuine article, as she believed, and was right. Still, she was rather flurried by the Yankee's evident watchfulness; and the only alien style she could think of just at the moment was the one she had practised up, with some little difficulty, in the imitation of Lady Glengariff's handwriting in the forged postscript. So she wrote what she wrote in that, and the words ran thus:—

"Miss Graham presents her compliments to M. Camille Le Tellier, and will take an early opportunity to mention the subject of his proposal to Miss Emily Maughan to her dear friend's beneficent guardian. She must, however, decline any attempt to *force* Monsieur Le Tellier's wishes and presence upon that gentleman, until duly authorised by him, leaving it to his own good sense and feeling of propriety to choose a fitter time and place than he seems apparently to have selected."

"Be darned if you seem at all afraid of him, after all!" said Flamingo, on receiving this note, handed over to him open for perusal; "and I don't mind mentioning that I do now begin to think it very likely it is all gammon and lies on the Frenchman's part. He always struck me as being a deuced sight more of a windbag than a sack of wheat. And as a letter like this won't go off into spontaneous combustion, but will keep as cool in one's pocket as a cucumber in a larder, I'll do myself the honour, miss, to accept your kind invitation, and remain to the *table d'hôte*."

"I am very glad of it. But I see people coming in, and I ought to go and dress a little for dinner," said Madeleine, smilingly accepting the position of inviter thus thrust upon her; "and so I must ask leave of absence for a few minutes, Mr. Brown. But there are plenty of newspapers and magazines, and lively people now, to amuse you till my return."

And so saying, she made a light curtsey, and withdrew from the admiring gaze of the American.

"Isn't she a handsome European article, n'ither?" he muttered to himself, as she retired. "But still there's some double, in-and-out play in it, I'm sure. Only it's no business of mine, but rather the contrary, if so be as she will bring about a reconciliation between me and that high and mighty British capitalist. I haven't explained to her about the skins, either, but I will at dinner!—But can she be intending any sort of hocus trick upon me? I don't see what it can be; but I'll keep my eye on the staircase she's gone up, and see that she don't give me the slip.—Don't shut the door, waiter; I'm as partial to air as a grampus."

And Flamingo hastened to plant his chair almost in the doorway of the grand saloon of Prospect Palace, leaning it back against a wall, with his large feet set tight by the heels upon the seat beneath—swaying backward and forward, and affecting to read a newspaper, but keeping his eye on the access to the apartment which Miss Graham appeared to ascend to.

This Mr. Brown, of America, was a person of great

discernment, and thoroughly on his guard against the wiles of women; nevertheless, the apparition of an elderly female, in a very plain bonnet and thick veil, who shortly after came hobbling downstairs as if she were lame, and went almost closely past him, with her head bent stiffly down, scarcely excited his attention.

Rooney was rather surprised, and muttered to himself, as he was laying the cloth for his forty-seven guests, "I didn't see Mrs. Doctor Bucktrout come in, that I know of—and now she's going out again." But it was Madeleine Graham, who had often disguised herself and mimicked her aunt in jest, but who now found it convenient to play the part in earnest, and passed thus forth from Prospect Palace, unquestioned and unsuspected, in her artfully-assumed costume.

CHAPTER XXXV

AULD ACQUAINTANCE.

THE "Red Herring" was not exactly the proper designation of the establishment whither Madeleine Graham, changing her gait as soon as she was fairly out of Prospect Palace, now swiftly directed her steps. The original proprietor had been famous as a fisherman on the lakes, and being a great hand at preparing all the necessary gear for the sport, hung out a gilded wooden representation of a trout, as a sign of his whereabouts, on the end of a fishing-rod, from an upper window. But time, weather, and the ill-natured wit of envious contemporaries (fishermen also have them) had speedily transformed the "Golden Trout" into the "Red Herring." And now that the house had been converted into a tavern and lodging-house for guests of inferior respectability, the vulgar name stuck to it more pertinaciously than ever. It was, however, situated rather romantically on the roadside to Killarney, on the skirts of Kenmare Woods, at no very great distance from, but about halfway between, Prospect Palace and the town. A stage-coach, passing at the time Madeleine went out of the hotel

grounds, seemed also to offer her a facility, of which she gladly availed herself. Not forgetting her character, however, as an elderly female, she hailed it in counterfeit weak accents, and chiefly by flourishing an umbrella of her aunt's, with which she had taken care to provide herself. The driver good-naturedly stopped; and a place being vacant in the vehicle, the guard, who was as like a giant as need be, affably lifted her in his arms, and stuffed her into it.

As it was now growing towards dusk, and Madeleine's face was enveloped in her thick old-woman's veil, it was not for several moments that she distinctly made out who were her fellow-passengers. Perhaps she was too much occupied with her own thoughts to take any particular notice at first. But she was rather struck, though vaguely, with the extremely fashionable figure of a lady, who was reclining, seemingly all but asleep, in a corner of the coach, but whose half-open feline eyes kept quiet note of all that occurred in it. Madeleine felt *that*, before she herself ventured to repay the stranger's furtive observation in kind, and then it was with the greatest difficulty she prevented herself from giving an outward sign of her inward astonishment; for without doubt those hard-lined black eyebrows, those pear-shaped, flat cheeks, that berouged but pallid and dissipated complexion, that dishonest, lurking glance, were all distinguished attributes of Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt!

It is not always so pleasant for "auld acquaintance" to rejoin one another on the road of life as the good-hearted old convivial song would make it appear. Madeleine Graham, at all events, felt no kind of call upon her to burst out into a paean on the occasion—considerably to the contrary. She felt that such an arrival was an addition to her troubles, with which she could most gladly have dispensed at the moment, while her general perplexities were carried to the height to account for it.

What, indeed, could Mademoiselle Olympe Loriôt possibly want on the Lakes of Killarney?

Had she come on a professional visit among the pleasure-seekers there? But there was no theatre in Killarney

—no scene for her displays; and after the riots she had occasioned even in the Protestant cities of the north of Ireland, it seemed unlikely that she should have determined to try her luck as an Orange dancer on the Catholic population of the south. The other persons in the coach were not, seemingly, of her company, and otherwise did not look at all like stage people: just the reverse,—country people.

It was very puzzling. Madeleine had no notion, after the strong repulse she had given her, that Olympe could have come after her. Had her old frenzy revived, then, and was she there in pursuit of Camille Le Tellier? That would not have been so bad. But how should she know Camille was in that part of the world? He was not likely to have given her any inkling of his proceedings; he was not so fond of her society. It was monstrously puzzling: but the height of imprudence—entirely out of the question—to inquire. Madeleine's principal hope and wish, on the contrary, were to keep altogether unknown and unobserved of her dear friend of the olden time.

But all of a sudden Mademoiselle addressed her, in excellent English, though with a vibrating, foreign accent,—

“Since you are probably a native of this country, Madame, will you favour me with information which are the estate and mansion of M. le Comte—the *Earl*, I mean, of Glengarr-eeff?”

What could Olympe want with knowing this? thought her once pupil. But she was in no hurry to answer. She feared the recognition of her voice, disguise it as she might—Mademoiselle had so often lauded its musical accentuation to her. She took the best plan she could—pretended to be deaf, slouched her head down, gave an old-womanish cough, and was silent.

Another of the passengers in the coach, however, a man who looked like a farmer or a grazier, did duty for her.

“We can't see it through the wood, my lady; and besides, there is a mighty big mist gathered on the mountains over the place, which would prevent us, if we could,” he said, most respectfully, to that showy bonnet and shawl.

"A thousand thanks, Monsieur! Ah, tell me, do you know this young lord personally? For me, I only know that he is the best, the bravest, the most generous of men; and I have come a long way out of my way to tell him so!" exclaimed Olympe, in an ecstatic tone. "Do but, at all events, point out to me the quarter of the horizon in which his honourable residence is situated! I have no other business in your mountains except to thank this generous young nobleman for a life, not worth preserving, which he has saved. Where—where is it?"

"Good heavens!" thought Madeleine. "Is she still haunted by her old mania, and speculates on the chances of the conquest of Lord Glengariff, under pretence of expressing her gratitude to him?—or has she come a-begging to him? She looks poor, though so bedizened in her garb. If so, she is going to be finely disappointed, and I shall soon be rid of her out of Killarney, if she don't suspect I am here."

None of the other passengers seemed able to point out the probable "quarter of the horizon" in question, not knowing what the phrase could mean. But Madeleine thought it not amiss to take the function upon her, which she did by literally pointing towards the black-peaked head of a mountain which reared itself in the distance, in a perfect sea of molten sunset gold, above the mists correctly described as concealing Glengariff Castle, and the lake at its feet, beyond Kenmare Woods.

Mademoiselle Loriôt gave a stare from the exquisitely-gloved hand to the thick old veil of her cicerone, burst into a flourish of thanks, and put her head and half her lean but immensely-crinolined framework out of the coach window, and continued to gaze so long in the point of view suggested, that she almost seemed to intend to occupy her position as a fixture, with all its consequences to the occupants of the vehicle. These were at once ludicrous, and a nuisance to most of the passengers; but Madeleine was rather pleased at having so turned attention away from internal concerns—like one of those politic kings of old, who always got up a foreign war when threatened with commotions at home. But she repented her clever-

ness when Mademoiselle Loriôt suddenly drew her figure back, and sunk breathless into her place in seeming horror and dismay, exclaiming, "*Dieu ! encore cet homme !*"

"What man?" Madeleine could not hinder herself from exclaiming, and in her own natural accents; but at the instant the coach had stopped, the door was flung open, and the guard called out, in stentorian accents,—

"Here you are, old lady! Here's the Red Herring!"

On the other hand, mealing like a proper Frenchman in the open air, in a species of Swiss balcony raised on arches of rough-hewn timber round the house, Monsieur Camille Le Tellier was distinctly visible, seated in a rustic chair above, with a cup of coffee beside him on a little table. He was sipping this, and affecting to study the contents of a little tattered Parisian paper in his hand. But his eye fell immediately on the stoppage below; and it was pretty plain, from his raised eyebrows and general startled look, that he heard the exclamation, though perhaps he did not know exactly whence it came.

"*Mon Dieu ! cette terrible femme, là encore !*" was the reciprocation of this modern Eneas to his Dido's similar utterance. Fortunately the coach made no delay; and as soon as Madeleine touched the ground the driver flourished his whip, and the horses trotted upon their destined route.

Madeleine found herself at liberty in a few instants to pursue her original object. There was no occasion for any announcement. She saw she had only to mount the outside gallery stairs to find herself face to face with her *ci-devant* lover. But her disguise must have been admirably executed, since even he did not at all recognise her until she spoke, although she straightened her figure, and altered it about as completely as a goddess who has adopted some old nurse's to do an errand of Olympian Jove—and has done it.

"Camille!" she said, "Monsieur Le Tellier!—do you not know me?"

The accents she used were so cold and distant that it would have been excusable enough if Le Tellier had not recognised the speaker even then. But he did so, and started up with a lover-like exclamation, and seeming in-

tention to clasp his betrothed to his heart, when a gesture from her repelled the movement.

"People may observe—and besides, all that sort of folly is over for ever now between us!" she said, quite sternly; and seeing that he looked at her with an angry as well as startled expression (she meant to startle him), she continued: "If for no other reason, I would discharge you for ever from my heart and confidence for your treason to love and honour in the revelations you have confided to an impudent stranger!"

"You are mistaken, dearest Madeleine!"—Mees Graham!—I have confided nothing. Mr. Brown has told you a lie if he has asserted to the contrary. I have only used him as my messenger—if you mean the American gentleman—because I was afraid, as usual, that in spite of your forced invitation you would be displeased with me for appearing before your relations," said Camille, very earnestly.

"Have you not told him that you have *letters*—the most compromising for me!"—which you carry about with you every where, at every risk of what may befall to them or yourself—and in them to me?" said Madeleine, with more anxiety than she suffered to appear on her countenance.

"Letters that compromised you? Never. I never said so? Letters full of the effusions of an unsurpassable affection and generosity, I may have said; but no possible risk is incurred with them. I carry them with me always in my portmanteau, which I scarcely ever lose out of my sight, and never but under the most faithful locks and keys," deprecated Camille. Madeleine had decidedly taken the true and proper position of the person who is most to blame in a quarrel—the upper and hectoring.

"You have them with you, then? And so often as I have asked you to destroy them?" she returned.

"But I found it impossible, *ma chère*! They are my only consolation—my only assurance—in your absence. I should fear to lose my hold entirely of the past without them. Whenever a doubt of your fidelity arises in my heart, I am obliged to read those *naïve* effusions of your

tenderness often and repeatedly, before I can satisfy myself that I have no real reason for apprehension."

"But you are wrong to do so, Camille ; my feelings are much changed," Madeleine answered, provoked a good deal more than softened by this loving statement. "You know we have always agreed that we are not the masters of our inclinations, we unfortunate mortals ! And women can no more help feeling a chill of the affections than men, who are very subject to it. Besides, there is no chance of our ever forming a happy union. Fortune, my father, your poverty and foreign descent, are all opposed to it. And so, I plainly tell you, I have made up my mind that we must part. I am very sorry for it, but really I cannot help it. And this last stupidity of yours in introducing a great rough bear of an American backwoodsman into our affairs has completely disgusted me with you. I come to take a quiet but eternal farewell of you, and to propose terms on which we can part advantageously for both."

Camille listened as if he could hardly believe in his own senses. But a sudden idea seemed to restore the balance of his faculties.

"Great heaven ! it is all true, then !" he exclaimed, clenching his fists to his forehead with a theatrical air of desperation. "And the means whence I hoped to draw our salvation will only prove the destruction of my happiness ! The worst suspicions which her going about with this immensely rich man so naturally provoked are confirmed, and it is a traitress of love for money whom I am going to ask to share with me my supplications for assistance to the very occasion of the crime !"

"The crime ! What nonsense you talk, Camille ! But you are quite right about the absurd plan you have formed. It was downright madness in the very beginning—based on the ridiculous notions people on the Continent have of the English. You grudge one another a knob of sugar, and you think we are always handing over thousands of pounds to any body who likes to ask it ! Mr. Behringbright is a very rich man ; but he is rich for himself, and for others who are of use or pleasure

to him—not for all the world : never think it. I tell you also that you are quite right in supposing you could not make him a more disagreeable request than for my hand. Why do you look at me so surprised? I speak to you with perfect candour and simplicity, because I really want you to understand what I say, and that I mean precisely what I do say.”

Camille, indeed, looked very much surprised : men seem always amazed when women do hard and perfidious things. Perhaps they think they ought to have the monopoly.

A short interval of wonder, however, seemed to awaken him more effectually to the situation. His handsome French visage and florid cheeks blackened all over with rage.

“After such a declaration,” he observed, with a quivering smile on the lower portion of the visage, in portentous contrast to the upper, “Mademoiselle will excuse me for repeating that I need every support to my convictions of her former sincerity, and that I believe I retain them in the *letters* to which allusion has been made.”

“Is this a threat, Camille?” Mademoiselle replied, with an expression of scorn that did not quite conceal apprehension. “But do you not know that to betray a woman’s confidence of the kind will be to consign yourself to the universal contempt of your fellow-men? The basest and most dishonourable of your sex in other matters own yet some last vestiges of respect to this sentiment. And you, Camille, are a Frenchman and a gentleman, and you will never disgrace the name of either by—by so unhandsome a procedure.”

“You would be alone to blame, Mademoiselle, if I did so,” returned Camille, with some feeling in his accents, but also much bitterness. “I warn you ; do not force me to forget every thing but the just vengeance I should then owe to humanity and my own outraged heart.”

“Are we sure not to be overheard here?” said Madeleine, looking cautiously around. “But let us speak on in French ; they say that is the proper language of diplomacy ; and after all, my dear Camille,” she continued,

adopting with perfect facility the language in question, "it has come to that between us."

"I am all attention to Mademoiselle."

"And reasonableness, I hope. But to speak, then, plainly, and without so much useless circumlocution—We both of us see very clearly we never can marry under existing circumstances. We both of us want to be rich and well off in all particulars. I am not saying it to reproach you, Camille; but you remember your own little affair with Olympe Lorient—who, by the by, seems by some strange chance to be in Killarney at this very moment. She has told me a thousand times, though I never dwelt on so disagreeable a circumstance to you, that you courted her to distraction as long as you thought she was wealthy, and cut her the moment you found she was poor."

"She was an impostress, a swindleress—represented herself as a person she was not."

"As her own rich pupil? Well, that only confirms what I say. But, remember, you also attempted to pass yourself off upon me as a French nobleman originally. Now, hear me patiently. My chance is of an impostor of quite a different order—an immensely rich man, who has pretended to be a poor one in order that he might be certain to secure himself a wife who loves him for himself alone."

"A wife? And do you pretend to be that personage to Mr. Behringbright?—a wife who loves a bald old man for *himself* alone? Aha, but I shall spoil that game!" ejaculated Monsieur Le Tellier.

"You can destroy me, no doubt—ruin me in the glorious speculation I have on hand; but you cannot do yourself any good thereby," returned Madeleine, who did not at all like the tone in which these words were said. "Whereas, by the plan I propose——"

"Be pleased to propose your plan, Mademoiselle."

But even Madeleine Graham did not like this uncomfortably plain way of demanding and putting the case. Half the wickedness of the world, at least, is transacted under doubtful lights, and without a word of explanation among the parties. Madeleine, however, felt she was on

the tight-rope, and that it would not do to start and boggle at a little jerk.

“What plan do I propose? Why, that I should be *allowed*—if you require the phrase—to marry a millionaire—*this* millionaire who proposes to me—and to make you rich and happy in your turn as a consequence.”

There was a considerable pause.

“Your intention is, then, to marry—*marry* Behring-bright Brothers, you mean to say? And consign me—*me*—ME, to the derision, to the scorn, to the incredulity of the world!” then thundered Monsieur Le Tellier, in reply.

The world!—the world! Most of us have a world that is not extremely wide. What *world* did Monsieur Camille mean in his expression? Upon my honour, I think Monsieur Camille Le Tellier’s *world* was composed of about a dozen commercial travellers, to whom he had confided the certainty of his approaching marriage—and settlement in a large way of business—with the beautiful eldest daughter of Sir Orange Graham, Knight, and ex-mayor of the great city of Belfast. But in this world, no doubt, figured the immediate and tremendous presence of Flamingo Brown, to whom he had boasted more than to the rest of all his “world” besides, and whose bullying manner betokened that he would hold him firmly to the interpretation.

Madeleine was not far wrong when she exclaimed, in reply, “Pho! What terrible stuff! What need you care about the *world*, as you call it? What world are you talking about? There is no world where, if you are rich, you will not be well considered; and I intend to make you so as well as myself. I *must*, in fact, with those letters in your possession!”

“Listen to me, then, wicked woman!” returned the young man, with sudden fierceness and determination; and I do not take upon me to say the feeling was merely one of wounded personal vanity, or doubtfulness of the advantages held out to him. “I will not *suffer* you to play this detestable part you assign yourself—and would fain induce me to become your accomplice in! You are my *wife* in the sight of God—by all the laws of nature

and love!—and my wife you shall remain! You shall never sacrifice Camille Le Tellier to your remorseless thirst for wealth—of all that your purse-proud father hates and rejects me for not being able to obtain! And how should I? Gold is only purchased by gold! I have no capital—no fortune—no possibilities! and you attempt to mock me with a shadow of contingent advantages, which your traitorous heart will repudiate the moment your prey is secure! But, poor as I am, I am a man, and have the privileges of a man! I have won you; I have subdued—I have conquered you, woman! You are mine! Woman, I am your husband, or you are the vilest of your sex! And do you dare to tell me you will take another man, instead of me, for money? I say you shall NOT. I will reveal all to him, rather! Do you hear me? I will reveal ALL to the millionaire Behring-bright! Do you defy me?—do you deride me?—I have your letters—YOUR LETTERS, Mademoiselle!—such letters as, perhaps, were never written before by woman to man! These I will produce before the eyes of all the world! And now do you deem me powerless—abject—resigned to see you confute me to every body who regarded me as the future son-in-law of a powerful merchant?—of an insulting British *plutocrat*, who, having no other objection against me, except that I am not worth five thousand a-year, deprives me of my fair right to the wife I have won, and would thankfully condemn me to—ay, what would he not condemn me to, were he the judge—and *you*—even you—the executioner?”

Camille Le Tellier broke short with these words, remarking the strange, the horrible look Madeleine had now fixed upon him. It was vacant—and yet full of terror! It seemed looking at something that was not there, and yet *was*: a spectral thought! It terrified Camille with its no-meaning more than the most violent expression of indignation, and the blood almost curdled in his heart; though Madeleine filled the pause by most quietly observing, “You are excited, Camille; take some of your coffee; you seem fond of coffee.”

“I *am* fond of coffee,” Camille remarked, passionately

drawing his cup away from her propinquity; "but I should fear to drink it after you had looked in it thus! It seems to me that you have the power to infuse poison into my drink with such a glance—and that you have the criminal barbarity to wish to do so at this moment!"

Madeleine laughed, a little hoarsely and huskily.

"What a silly fellow you are to talk so! You should not put such ideas in people's heads; but I believe some poisons are good for the complexion; and you are very proud of your complexion, you know, Camille. Did I not tell you once, when you said *I* looked pale and thin, that I had read in a book how arsenic—for example—fattened one up, and made one look quite plump and florid? I believe you have taken the hint, you look so well! I don't know that I look very well myself of late—I am sure I did not just before I left Belfast, what with your worrying and Emily's; so perhaps I may try a little *on myself*—not you—and make it a pretty strong dose on some occasion, if ever I hear of your trusting strangers again, or any further, in our affairs! So you see, if you have your letters, I have an antidote to them. Bah! we are talking melodrama, like two lovers in a last chapter of one of Sue's novels. Let us be reasonable creatures; one of us at least isn't French! Come, I admit that you have the power in your hands; but do you really mean to say that you will not allow me to marry where only I find it feasible to secure a respectable establishment?"

"I have failed, then, to make myself understood," returned Camille, with an evident revival of exasperation. "Listen again, then! In the eyes of the law I have no power of control over your actions, Miss Graham; I am *not* your husband in law. But I am the proprietor of the letters sent to me; and I swear to you, the moment I hear of any decided and real intention on your part to commit a moral bigamy with this Plutarch Behringbright—a man also who has insulted me, who has refused me my right of reparation as a gentleman, whom it will be useless now to importune in my favour—I will transfer all my rights to the entire collection in *his* favour, stipulating only that he shall *peruse them*—from the first young-lady

billet signed in your name to the last, which blushed to give itself any signature at all, but does not need the glasses of an expert to be recognised as undoubtedly of the same caligraphy."

These words were pronounced in tones that carried conviction to Madeleine's inmost soul. She felt that, after overcoming so many obstacles to secure her grand prize—after daring all the risks she had incurred respecting Emily Maughan—after spending a great deal of money on an otherwise stupid and tiresome excursion—after having compromised herself completely with her family for any future claims to meaning and sagacity in her enterprises—the vanity of a French coxcomb arose before her, an impassable wall of adamant, and debarred advance to the gleaming mountain of gold in prospect, for ever!

Had it even been a real Cupid, god of love, that thus refused to acquiesce in the extension of his name into *cupidity*! But Madeleine felt quite assured it was not personal devotion to herself, so much as the resolution to keep possession of a valuable "material guarantee," that was acting upon the mind and resolves of Camille Le Tellier. No woman could have remained so perfectly insensible to the implied passionate obligation, had she believed in it. She felt only, therefore, the more irritated at the pretence assigned to the obstinacy that was likely to effect so enormous an injury to her prospects. While she rapidly recalled these things, these dangers, these difficulties, these deprivations, this failure, this humiliation, this inextricable entanglement—that first burning touch of resentment which Flamingo Brown's revelations had kindled in her breast spread like a circle of ravening caustic through all its fibres, till her whole heart seemed to glow like a ball of fire in its confines. A feeling of the utterest hatred and contempt—of desperate desire and resolve to escape from this paltry yet overmastering thralldom—seemed to light up in her brain, darting upward from those lappings of suppressed but flaming fury. And a THOUGHT—a tremendous, solitary THOUGHT—started into glaring existence, and, growing in intensity with every moment's revolution of time, seemed to convert Madeleine

Graham's whole beautiful headpiece into a dark-lantern of hell—glaring within with murder, malice, and revenge; without, all black calm and impervious serenity.

About two minutes of utter silence with Madeleine did a work which all the ages of time could not undo. Then she spoke.

"If you are really in earnest, Camille—if you really love me so much and truly—of course I will not for a moment entertain any project which you do not approve," she said, in very sweet, humble, and, as it were, heart-subdued accents. "In fact, I love you a thousand times better than ever, dearest, for your manly determination and evident devotion to me; and whenever you are prepared to embrace every extremity of poverty by marrying me, in spite of my father's refusal and renunciation, I am quite ready to become your wife in *law* as well as in love!—this day, this hour, this very minute, if you like."

Camille, however, had no great relish in his secret heart for poverty. He had known and seen a good deal of it; and it did not seem to him likely to be much more endurable with a fine young lady to share it, and upbraid him at every turn for its disadvantages, than alone. Had he dared to be poor, he would not have been the man he was—or, rather, he would have been *a* man! Of course he expressed this idea, which in reality chiefly related to himself, in the proper sentimental form.

"No, Madeleine, no!" he exclaimed, with heroic fervour. "I will not suffer you to commit a crime against love and honour. But I will never ask of you to share so poor a portion as mine is in this world till some unforeseen good fortune—the relenting of your avaricious family, perhaps—points out to us the means of a happier fate and union."

Madeleine knew very well what this meant. Monsieur Le Tellier had frequently intimated that her father ought to give her a portion of at least five thousand pounds, furnish them a house and all conveniences handsomely, and give him a partnership in his manufactory. Her father, on the other hand, had threatened to turn her out of doors if she dared for a moment to encourage the addresses of a

“penniless foreign vagabond,” and was the kind of father to keep his word.

No doubt it increased her irritation to be the victim not only of such inordinate but such useless selfishness! She looked at Camille; and the handsomer she saw he was, or thought that he considered himself, the more she disliked and despised him for such a mean, senseless, overbearing excess of personal vanity. But it behoved her to keep these ideas to herself. Perhaps, however, they partly suggested the new but most necessary combination of intrigue that arose in her protean brain.

“I did not suppose I could be brought to admire you more than I have always done, Camille,” she said, still in those fascinating, melting, and molten tones; “but I am delighted, proud—very proud—to find you prefer me even to that idol of fortune of which I once supposed you so earnest an adorer that you would not hesitate even at that sacrifice—at any sacrifice—to it! I confess that was one of the motives which strengthened me to my own immolation, though with every imaginable reluctance and remorse. But let us now consider if it may not be possible to conciliate your noble scruples with the plan of extrication I had proposed myself. I have not hesitated to avow to you that I am an object of preference with the wealthy Behringbright—doubtless with the most honourable views, for he is incapable of any other. Of a cold and lethargic disposition, as he is, and steeled by my affection and engagements to you, it would, however, be perfectly easy for me to play with his passion for almost any length of time, and meanwhile induce him to do almost any thing I desired of a character to demonstrate his attachment towards me. He believes that I have a great friendship for Emily Maughan; and could he be brought to view in you no rival of his own tenderness but rather a suitor for the hand of a young person, his ward, whom I know he is desirous to settle advantageously in life—I think it might be easily managed, and that he would do all for you your absurd French fancies have suggested. Once placed in possession of a competency, your vanity—if you have any—shall be more amply gratified than it could

possibly be by any other means—by all the world beholding how Madeleine Graham will prefer you to the richest man in England as a husband !”

Camille opened his large blue hairdresser’s model-like lustrous eyes at this suggestion, so agreeable to all the most dominant impulses of his nature.

“Ah ! if this were possible, my Madeleine !” he exclaimed.

“Why should it be impossible ? I have already possessed Mr. Behringbright with the notion ; nay, I have myself sometimes been crossed by a jealous apprehension to that effect, that in reality you have a regard—I had almost said a preference—for *Emily Maughan*.”

“Absurd !—it is utterly nonsensical ! For a young woman who has always treated me with a marked distance—I had almost said, with aversion and repulse !” exclaimed Camille, but with a conceited smile which again suggested a still more dexterous leading to Madeleine.

“You are absurd now yourself, dear Camille,” she resumed, with a glance full of secret scorn and seeming admiration. “I have a thousand reasons to consider that it was simply resentment for finding me the object of your gallantry that rendered Emily so malicious towards us both, and put her upon doing all she could to warn me against you, and to sever us. Camille, what will you say if I confide to you a secret ? You do not, with all your experience, understand all the intricacies of a woman’s nature. What will you say if I declare to you I know it for a certain fact that Emily Maughan has refused the hand and coronet of an earl—of that very young nobleman who nearly threw you over into the Belfast pit, and who is now suffering himself from the effects of a reprisal from an exasperated animal—and that I believe this amazing rejection is prompted solely by a secret preference in her heart to another ! In fine, that that other—I believe I should not be far wrong in asserting—is, must be, the only attractive young man with whom she can ever have been thrown into contact : in brief, Camille, *yourself* !”

Le Tellier was not so struck with amazement and incredulity at this climactical word as he ought to have

been. Of course all the qualities in the male sex are more strongly developed than in the female, where they exist at all; and a man-*coquette* is free to believe in the influence of his charms even more extensively than the feminine creature of the same genus.

"Good heavens! how is it I never suspected, never apprehended, so disastrous a complication? After all the accounts you gave me of Miss Maughan's unkind interference in our affairs—dissuasives of you against me! And do you assure me it is a fact, Madeleine?—*You?*"

"I do not assure you it is a *fact*, only a probable surmise,—which after all may be but the fancy of my own too partial judgment," replied Madeleine. "But, true or not, it is a great probability, and sufficient ground for the plan I have hinted to you. Remove Mr. Behringbright's apprehensions of the most dangerous of rivals in you by proposing to him for Emily Maughan, and I assure you of a handsome establishment in life, which shall then be shared with you, I trust, by a wife a good deal more to your mind."

"But it is folly. Emily Maughan will decline the offer—she will declare that she never entertained it. I shall seem like a madman to Mr. Behringbright."

"But Emily is remote—impassably distanced from this spot by her rejection of Lord Glengariff. I will make myself the medium of all communications, and will report what I please. Meanwhile Mr. Behringbright will be engaged in your favour; I shall dare to press your claims on his consideration. Not a moment, I swear it, shall be lost to accomplish the grand object we have in view, if you will only lend me your aid thus far in righting ourselves in the position. I do not ask you to declare *any* thing compromising. Ask only permission to pay your addresses to Emily as the meaning of the *business* you declared yourself—and have suffered the American to report every where—you have with Mr. Behringbright. Leave to me the task of convincing *him* that he will thereby promote the happiness of his ward, and his own tranquillity."

Camille—like all men who are pretty certain not to arrive at a correct judgment—reflected profoundly.

"You engage me a little out of my depth, Madeleine," he said at last, in a considerably puzzled tone. "But I am sure that as long as I retain your letters—of which no one shall deprive me but with my life—you will not dare to play me false in the matter. Therefore I may perhaps venture on the step you urge upon me. But know for certain that I remain in this country, in this very house which your Mr. *Brownjohn*—ha! ha! what folly to deprive himself of his only merit!—also inhabits, a perpetual observer of your actions, and that I will not suffer any increase of the intimacy you admit to exist between yourself and the millionaire Behringbright. It is for you to extricate us all as speedily as possible from a painful position, by securing to me this establishment, which you are then immediately to share with me. I have a right to consent to your project: I owe reprisals to the insolence and tyranny of wealth in your country."

"He would remain on the spot, would he, the dangerous fool!" thought Madeleine. But with her customary tact she perceived it would do rather harm than good to add a word that might still seem to combat Camille's suspicions, only half lulled to rest. She took it for granted he was convinced. Much was meanwhile gained; the danger of an immediate destructive revelation to Mr. Behringbright averted; one of her most necessary fallacies was to receive a tangible support; Camille himself was compromised in her manoeuvres. Time was gained, above all—time for that other certainly tremendous, and horrible, and perilous, but, if successful, most assured escape from all her difficulties!—or for some easier deliverance, if such were possible; time, at all events, to reflect—to lay plans deeply and inscrutably—to provide against the possibility of detection. Detection of what? Madeleine had not *yet* pronounced the *word* even to herself; the idea stood erect, full, unblenching in her mind, as a figure of the sheeted dead in a churchyard!

All that remained at that time to be done was to complete the restoration of Camille's credulity in her affection for him, and submission to his will. Aided by such boundless vanity, this needed no great effort. But we need not

remain present at the process ; it is enough that the treacherous syren succeeded.

She even prevailed upon Camille to promise he would do all in his power to dissipate the impressions he had "unintentionally" given to the American Brown. Madeleine knew she had prepared that gentleman to receive the disavowal patiently, and suggested that it could easily be done by Camille's receiving the cool note she had penned him quietly, and seeming to acquiesce in its contents. Above all, he was to take no notice that it was *written in a different hand* from her usual one—purposely : *she* would not place herself in any way in the power of such a fellow !

Returning, after this interview, to her quarters, Madeleine thought she had a right to congratulate herself on the results of her audacity in thus stealing a march along the entire battle-array of adverse circumstances. Most cleverly had she shifted her own strategic ground. Even the certainty she had acquired of the arrival of Mademoiselle Loriôt in her vicinity, which would have disquieted her at another time, rather added to her satisfaction now ; —a power of doubtful hostility, perchance, at present, but in whom an ally might be created, if dexterously handled.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONGRATULATIONS.

MADELEINE found she had been absent about an hour and a half ; but dinner was not yet served. Luckily, Flamingo Brown, having solaced himself with a great quantity of cobbles, slings, and cocktails, and made aware that dinner would be at the "damned aristocratic hour" of seven, had fallen asleep in his post of observation. Madeleine, therefore, got comfortably enough past him. But she horrified Rooney the waiter again, who met her, and uttered a terrified exclamation—explained to Madeleine by finding her aunt in her bed-room. The poor man was assured he had encountered, for the second time that day, Mrs. Bucktrout's *wraith*, or double, as he styled it, and confidently

predicted in the kitchen and servants' hall that the old lady would shortly be called to her account.

Mrs. Bucktrout, who had made a number of stupid inquiries for her niece before she looked on her dressing-table, and saw a short pencilled note, to the effect that Madeleine had borrowed her old cloak and bonnet for a joke on young Sparrowgrass, was looking rather dull and puzzled over it, as if she did not quite understand joking at such a time. She even complained so a little to her niece on her entry in the disguise, and did not seem quite to like it, even when Madeleine admitted that it was very inconsiderate of her; but that the foolish young fellow had wagered her a sovereign she could not take him in any possible disguise she could assume; and she had met the whole party at the landing-pier, and they had not known her, and she should earn her sovereign. But how was poor dear Lord Glengariff? Of course the accident was much exaggerated—and how had it happened? And was he much hurt?—or was it all a false report? And where was her uncle? And had not Mr. Behringbright arrived with plenty of other doctors, in case there was any need of them?

Mrs. Bucktrout replied in the methodical order she usually observed in her train of ideas. No; it was all too dreadfully true! In bending towards the stag "to open its throat with his hunting-knife" (was the delicate phrase used by Mrs. Bucktrout), Lord Glengariff had overreached himself in making an imprudent effort to grasp the terrible creature by the antlers, and had been fearfully gored in the right arm and side. It was with the greatest difficulty, Mrs. Bucktrout averred, that three of the Glengariff rowers had beaten the stag off with their oars. The young lord had lost *pails of blood* before Dr. Bucktrout could bind up the lacerations!

He had, however, preserved all his senses and faculties till they got on shore: and though then in a very weak state, had insisted on walking up to the castle from the landing-place, to avoid alarming his excitable parent. He had even managed to preserve sufficient strength and energy to go to his mother himself, mention that an accident had

occurred to him, and convince her, by his own unconcerned manner, that it was of no great consequence—being certain the report would soon reach her; nay, she was believed to have supernatural means of intelligence in all misfortunes of the kind to her family. But as soon as this important duty was gone through, his strength had failed him—he was obliged to be supported to an apartment and put to bed. In this situation Dr. Bucktrout had dressed his wounds, and pronounced them of the most dangerous character. He had even declined to answer for the life of his patient—particularly if he was in the least disturbed or agitated. Accordingly, when even Mr. Behringbright had arrived with two of the Killarney surgeons, the young earl had refused to see them, declaring that he had the greatest confidence in the skill of the doctor; and his mother, who was in constant attendance upon him, had supported him in his refusal. Mr. Behringbright was excessively irritated and alarmed at the fact, not apparently entertaining the highest opinion of the Belfast mediciner's skill, though he did not express himself to that effect. And he had retained his two surgeons at Glengariff; and while hastening Mrs. Bucktrout back to the charge of her niece, had desired her to state that he should remain all night at the castle, in hopes that he might prevail upon an acceptance of the reinforcement of surgical aid he had brought with him. At the same time Lord Glengariff had objected to see even Mr. Behringbright himself, being, doubtless, much offended with his singular conduct on the lake, as regarded Madeleine, that day; which Mrs. Bucktrout, for the first time turning a little rebellious, professed herself unable indeed to understand.

The aunt still spoke of Mr. Behringbright as Mr. *Brownjohn*; but Madeleine felt now it would be necessary for her future influence and proceedings to clear up this mystery to her relative. She therefore explained to her aunt that this was merely a name assumed by one of the richest of English merchants, who had taken a fancy to her, she almost believed, when she was a girl at school in London, had followed her to Ireland, and had that very morning made her an offer of marriage, which she had accepted.

The whole wonderful affair was now made clear and patent to Mrs. Bucktrout's not illimitable capacity. Oh, how glad she was! With what admiration she looked at her niece! How well convinced she felt, in spite of the latter's disclaimers, that she had all along known what a wealthy suitor was in pursuit of her under that assumed name!

"Won't your father be glad, and your poor mother, who were so plagued at one time with the idea of your doing something silly with that French beggar! Won't Mrs. Sparrowgrass be ready to eat off her finger-nails, after all the trouble she took to keep you from her son, to find you have done so much better! I'll let them all know it at dinner! How mad it will make them!"

Neither, in spite of the addition to her risks it involved, could Madeleine deny herself this signal public triumph. She was even no longer apprehensive that Flamingo Brown should hear of it. It would rather confirm him in his belief of her power with the great capitalist, and consequent wish not to meddle offensively any further in her affairs, while it would go far to remove any degree of adherence he might still retain in the boastings of Camille Le Tellier.

It was rather funny to witness the effects of the intelligence in question; at first circulated in the most quiet, unintentional, underhand style by Mrs. Bucktrout, who was sly enough in her own way.

Mrs. Sparrowgrass took occasion, when the soup was removed, finding herself with only her son between her and Mrs. Bucktrout, to express how pleased she was to think that her niece, Miss Graham, had been spared such a dreadful shock as Lord Glengariff's accident must have been to every body on board his lordship's barge, by accepting the invitation of the commercial gentleman *staying at the "Red Herring"* into his boat. Every body wondered at it, she said, at the time, but it had turned out so much for the best.

"Of course my niece could not do otherwise; she is engaged to Mr. *Behringbright*," replied Mrs. Bucktrout, with dignity.

"Engaged to Mr. Behringbright ! What Mr. Behringbright ?" stammered young Sparrowgrass, turning very pale over his second plate of fish.

"Behringbright Brothers, the head of the firm, Mr. Sparrowgrass ; you must have heard of them in London," said Mrs. Bucktrout, with most determined coolness.

After that, Grassgreen Sparrowgrass, Esq., ate not another morsel, though he took plate after plate of any thing that was offered him during the remainder of the dinner. He drank, however, in great profusion ; moselle and brandy went down his throat at a rate that perfectly alarmed his mother, who in vain repeatedly observed what a fine match Lord Glengariff's sister, the Lady Gwendoline, must now have become, in case his lordship should die. And Sparrowgrass had hysterics that night in his own bedroom, with his mother and all his sisters attending him ; and went on like a little madman, and reproached them with being the cause of the unhappiness of his whole life, by not allowing him to propose, as he had wished a hundred times, before that old horrid fellow came into play.

The Misses Sparrowgrass were much surprised and offended on their own account, when they heard all about it. What an artful minx she must have been ! She must have known all about it ! She never would have looked at such a strange, shy, unaccountably-behaving man, if she had not known all along how rich he was ! But it was no wonder. Her father was *in trade* (their own had been out of it ever since he died, and they were only just out of mourning for him) ; and so, no doubt, she knew all about people *in trade*. For their parts, they would not have had a person *in trade* for all the world. A merchant, or any thing of that sort, was all the same. Still, they did wonder at the artfulness she had displayed in keeping the truth concealed, and pretending to flirt with their poor brother, and trying it on every body in point of fact. Even that dear, witty, funny, clever Vivian Faunteroy, she had tried it upon *him*, Helena Sparrowgrass declared, with a toss of her head. And though *she* had reason to know the attempt was a *complete failure*, still she must say she thought poor

Mr. Behringbright would have a splendid catch of a wife, if he really meant to marry a woman who set her cap that way at every man she met with.

"I don't suppose she will leave it off either, even when she has married that old fellow," said the eldest Miss Sparrowgrass, who was about, I think, thirty-seven years of age, but thought people would draw a much less inference when they heard her call a man of forty-two *old*.

But meanwhile the news spread, and every body was seized with admiration and homage for the successful competitor—the drawer of the great prize in the matrimonial lottery. Nobody cared a bit whether Mr. Behringbright really was old, and bald, and dull, and grumpy in temper, and what not. He was a good match—a splendid match—a first-rate match! It was impossible for any girl to do better. She might live the life of a duchess if she pleased. No doubt she would have a house in Hyde Park. Mr. Behringbright had two country seats; she could give the grandest parties in town; and hearing that, the Misses Sparrowgrass even moderated their clamours, and made up to the bride elect of a million of money. And thus was Madeleine herself more and more formally plighted to society to go through with her great enterprise; more and more yoked into the harness of her secret tremendous necessity; more and more engaged to her "world," to satisfy its expectations, as Camille Le Tellier was to his.

Last, but not least important, among these flattering and unconscious but powerful agents of destiny, figured Mr. Flamingo Brown. You would have thought some considerable portion of his immortal soul was at stake with this gentleman in the successful prosecution of the "spec." in which he desired Mr. Behringbright's coöperation, so earnestly did he devote himself to maintaining the place he considered he had achieved in the favour of the lady in the ascendant. He had his own ideas still, no doubt—though somewhat modified—that there was some capital hoax in progress upon the credulity of Mr. Behringbright. He could not bring himself quite to disbelieve the Frenchman's inuendoes, disproved as they seemed to be. But what was all that to him—what was any nation's, let

alone individual's, happiness and prosperity to him—provided he could carry out a commercial speculation likely to end in a great profit to himself? And so he too entered himself emulously among the courtiers of the successful beauty; and though at times—especially after his second bottle of chambertin at dinner—his homage grew almost rudely and vulgarly pointed and exclusive, Madeleine treated him with particular distinction and kindness, and attached him with almost every other word more firmly to her interests, by making him believe they were his own.

In other respects she bore her honours meekly. Indeed people thought at times she seemed greatly more thoughtful and absent than usual. I am sure she did not hear repeatedly what the American said, though she showed her pearly teeth whenever he indulged in his loud hoarse laugh over the excellent stories he told her of his many clever “strokes of business;” which, to say truth, had most of them a strong touch of the filibuster or picaroon in them, but he evidently thought simply proofs of cleverness in his vocation. It is quite certain that she agreed with him he was in the right in his lawsuit with Mr. Behring-bright about the Californian hides, which he related with the utmost diffuseness, railing at the judge as he went on for partiality against him; in spite of which, he said, the jury gave it in his favour, knowing “what trade was” themselves much better than any judge in the land. But although she coincided in this opinion with such impartiality against her newly-betrothed, Madeleine was not much to blame in that, for she did not know in what she agreed; she only knew or thought she was conciliating a dangerous foe.

Perhaps, if she listened to any thing really very much that evening in the after-dinner chat of the company, it was to a conversation which her aunt started in the midst of a select circle, agreeably to her favourite custom, on a religious topic. It was not a kind of discussion in which Madeleine Graham wontedly took much delight. She went to church in a proper family way, and heard Sir Orange read the Bible and prayers whenever, as head

of the family, he was pleased to require such attendance ; but she attached no particular ideas to any thing of the sort she heard, thinking it was all very good and right, and all that—and sometimes that the preacher had a good or bad voice, a handsome or an indifferent physiognomy. But on this occasion Mrs. Bucktrout introducing the subject of predestination—*à propos* a doubt which she admitted herself to entertain whether Lord Glengariff was exactly in a state of preparedness for a call to the other world, in case his injuries should baffle the skill of his “medical attendant”—for perhaps the first time in her life Madeleine evidently lent “a serious and attentive ear” to all that was said on the topic. Insomuch that Professor Doubleday—who also happened to have come to Killarney on a geological exploration, according to him—did her the unusual honour (science, also, did homage to success in money-clutching !) of inquiring her opinion on the subject.

Madeleine started at the question, but said : Yes, she was quite a predestinarian ; she believed people were forced to do things whether they liked or no ; only she did not think people were punished for such a tremendous time as people thought for doing what they could not help doing.

She said this in rather a quick, perhaps a little wild and strange way ; and only the first part of the opinion was held generally orthodox. But, in consideration that the lovely theologian was in a way to become Mrs. Behringbright, Professor Doubleday himself merely smiled, and passed on to the doctrine of election by grace.

Madeleine was also so gracious to her worshippers that night as not to go to bed so early as she usually did, to preserve her eyes and complexion, whenever there was no particularly good reason for sitting up. It may be that Madeleine was almost afraid to trust herself alone with her own thoughts,—**THAT THOUGHT**—that night ! And yet she declined her aunt's kind invitation to share her room on the occasion, as her uncle was away ; and finally found herself, with a shudder,—and yet with a kind of gladness,—alone with the overmastering, terrific, inevitable idea, rising in more and more distinct and

ghostly outlines before the fixed gaze of her spell-bound mind.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE ENGAGED FINGER.

SOME resolutions, however, require a great deal of fitting and refitting,—taking out of the holes we put them in originally,—shifting, awling, hammering, and clenching, before we can quite make up our minds that the work as it stands is a good work—that is to say, workmanly finish: for this kind of mental carpentering is not always squared according to the rule of right—oftener the other way. Almost all our really good and fitting ideas are simple and one-sided,—the evil ones complex and full of doubts and obliquities. The idea which now possessed Madeleine Graham's brain was of the latter order.

Perhaps, after all, she would never have done what most people afterwards supposed (without sufficient proof, it appeared) she did do but for a most disastrously overwhelming complication of urgencies. Was it not Goethe who said that he felt within himself the capability of every human wickedness? Are we to suppose that the great German mountain-in-a-mist meant thereby to declare that on a sufficient temptation or pressure he should have been as black a criminal as who you please?—or that he merely wished Society to consider what it was about in the creation of circumstances that influence the destinies for good or evil of average humanity? Was this girl, in short, so much guilty of her acts as SOCIETY of this girl? For my part, I do not know: I take every thing for granted, and relate what I find on record, without attempting to account for it otherwise than as appears on the direct face of things.

Well, then, fate would have it that Mr. Behringbright—after a very uncomfortable night at Glengariff Castle, and a singular explanation on the following morning within its walls—advised himself to pass over to the

society of his lady-love. Like most persons who are diffident of their personal attractions, and desire to find favour in the sight of some fair object of the affections, he considered that he should look better neatly shaved and in a clean shirt. All his gear of this sort was at the Red Herring Tavern ; and thither he directed himself to be conveyed in the jaunting-car he had hired the previous day at Prospect Palace. I say nothing of his two surgeons whom he had taken from Killarney on a bootless errand, Lord Glengariff persisting in refusing all medical aid or assistance whatever, excepting that of Dr. Bucktrout, who, almost for the first time in his life — but most gratefully, poor man — found himself treated as an oracle of Æsculapian wisdom : unless the reader should be interested so far in their fate as to be glad to know that they received fifteen guineas sterling apiece from Behringbright for being jumped up suddenly on a jaunting-car off to a castle two miles distant, where they saw no patient, and, consequently, did neither harm nor good, and were duly forwarded by the same conveyance back to their homes the following day.

At the Red Herring Tavern, Mr. Behringbright — greatly against his will, and altogether out of his calculation, for he had forgotten about him in the hurry of events — was forced to grant an interview to Monsieur Camille Le Tellier ; who, supposing, like most other people, that there was no business of importance in the world but his own, took the very first opportunity that presented itself to go through the ceremonial laid down for him by Madeleine Graham ; — that is to say, sent in his card ; obtained a brief interview, which he did not want particularly to lengthen from any gratification it afforded himself ; and — in a manner so incoherent that even the exciting nature of the subject and his Gallicisms of language scarcely accounted for it — declared himself to be a fervid admirer of his (Mr. Behringbright's) beautiful ward Emily Maughan, and requested his favour and permission to make "the adoration of his sentiments" known to that young lady.

This was part of the intelligence Mr. Behringbright

came to communicate, in all the confidence of love and unbounded trust, to Madeleine Graham the morning after the fatal stag-hunt.

Poor man! he did not attach that degree of stress to the information he might, if he had known what part of it would bear on his own destiny. If we knew it, with what respect should we survey the bit of a railway flange which, flying off, would consign us—even to heaven! But these are uncomfortable remarks, which there is no occasion to insert in a work of light modern fiction like ours.

Madeleine—who was looking lovelier than ever that morning, owing to a peculiar lustrous glow on her cheeks and in her eyes—seemed much gratified by the statement. She expressed herself with great warmth to that effect. How happy darling Emily could now be made! How her wonderfully disinterested—though very strange, certainly, and unaccountable—infatuation for this young Frenchman could now be recompensed! Her (Madeleine's) dearest Mr. Behringbright—since Mr. Behringbright he was—was so rich, he could easily afford to make the beloved friend of her youth happy with the husband of her choice. Would her dearest Mr. Behringbright promise it? Would he set Monsieur Le Tellier up in business, or appoint him to some lucrative situation in his own service? Or, best of all (and really it would have been much the best), would he, could he, get him some good consulship abroad? He must have interest with Government. Could he get him appointed consul at Lima, or at St. Petersburg, or at Hong-Kong, or at any distant place like that? She was quite strangely energetic in her demand for a *distant* place of display for the commercial talents, and acquirements, and gentlemanly manners, and knowledge of various foreign languages, including his own, which Emily had always assured her Camille—that is, Mr. Le Tellier—possessed. Emily would not mind where she went—no woman of any feeling, who truly loved any man, would mind where she went—with a beloved husband. She thought—she knew—she was certain—Emily would rather prefer—would greatly prefer—a *very* distant place of settlement—for a time, at least.

Could this distant place of settlement have been found for Monsieur Le Tellier—and could he have been coaxed into departing to occupy it—perhaps all might yet have gone well. The *Morning Boast* might yet have exulted in the details of the gorgeous parties, the balls, and other grand receptions of the Baroness Behringbright at her magnificent mansion in Hyde Park. Camille Le Tellier himself might have lived on, smoking his cigar over a manifest, and otherwise appetising himself for dinner at the expense of the British nation, in some latitude more favourable to indolent enjoyment of existence than the exertion of the greater faculties of the human mind, which he did not possess. But unhappily, unlike most persons who have influence with Government, Mr. Behringbright had a conscience and a considerable sense of patriotism; and therefore—although he smiled, and looked and felt much pleased at Miss Graham's eagerness to secure a *distant* place of residence for the handsome husband-elect of her friend—he answered her quietly, but with evident fixity of resolve, that he should never think of forcing an incompetent foreigner upon the public charge of Great Britain, though, doubtless, he had considerable interest with the minister who gave away such appointments. And he was convinced—in spite of the good opinion so sensible a girl as Miss Emily Maughan appeared to have formed of him (but there was no accounting for delusions of that sort)—he was a perfectly incompetent, coxcomical young jackanapes, as regarded any position of public responsibility and charge. Even with respect to his own private mercantile business, which only involved the interests of an individual, he should be very far (from the opinion he had thus far formed of him) from choosing to intrust such a person with the management of any important branch, or remote distribution, which might remove him from constant control and supervision. He might be competent to sell silk and lace to mercers and milliners. He seemed to be so, since he was employed by some respectable French houses; but for his own part, he (Mr. Behringbright) would greatly prefer to all these alternatives settling a handsome sum of money upon Emily

Maughan, as a security against the probable results of folly and extravagance on the part of her husband-to-be, and contributing something reasonable besides to enable him to set up business on his own account, as a dealer in Lyons manufactures, or to purchase a partnership in one of the two or three firms he represented.

Madeleine thought to herself all this would hardly tally with the lofty ideas of his own self-consequence and right to position in the world of Monsieur Le Tellier. And once more the great THOUGHT started into vivid relief and inevitable consequence in her vision ! The contempt expressed on so short an acquaintance by a man whose calm sagacity and dispassionate estimate of men and things she had learned to respect, also fearfully strengthened her own. And one must have a great contempt for humanity before one undertakes to consign to the grave and worm, of one's own act and deed, even a single wearer of the outward form. Most of your mighty conquerors and climbers to empire have illustrated this principle on a colossal scale ; but the hedgeside murderer and burglar "with violence" do so also in their degree, and the contempt which the ticket-of-leave man entertains for humanity *in his own person* is one of his most formidable qualifications for the garotte and gallows.

However, there was nothing more to be said at this time on the subject. And indeed Mr. Behringbright, after delivering his dictum, passed to another, which completely swallowed up every minor peril and dread in the consideration of Madeleine.

She inquired after Lord Glengariff's state, with just the degree of kind and sympathetic, but not too warm, interest which she imagined would, under all the circumstances, be agreeable to Mr. Behringbright. And the reply she received would surely have shaken any less firmly-seated soul to its foundation.

According to the patient's own declared opinion—and the endorsement of Dr. Bucktrout—Lord Glengariff was in a most dangerous state, and there was scarcely a possibility he should recover from the terrible fever and irritation produced by the goring of the stag. There was an

ancient proverb indeed on that subject, Mr. Behringbright observed, which asserted that cases of recovery from such injuries were scarcely to be hoped for :

“ Of tusk of boar have thou no fear,
But beware thy life from horn of deer.”

But his Lordship's demeanour was besides of the most extraordinary character, and gave rise to the notion that the shock and constitutional disturbance he had undergone was suddenly developing the family taint in his blood ! He seemed to wish to die : obstinately—almost with fury—refused all medical assistance but that of Dr. Bucktrout, whose skill, even to his niece Mr. Behringbright could not avoid remarking, he could not consider equal to the emergency. And the shaken and disordered state of his mind was further to be judged by certain facts Mr. Behringbright proceeded to detail,—how little to Madeleine's satisfaction may be considered.

Lord Glengariff had in the first place altogether refused to see Mr. Behringbright ; alleging that he was in some inexplicable manner the author of the terrible calamity he had sustained. When at length he was soothed by his mother and Dr. Bucktrout into seeing him, their interview had been of the most singular and excited description. Lord Glengariff was, of course, in bed, but evidently in a state of high fever and general physical commotion, which it occasionally required the strength of his mother's gigantic nurse, of Dr. Bucktrout, who was a strong little man, and even of Molloy the steward to restrain. The moment he saw Mr. Behringbright he burst into the most passionate reproaches against him, for having driven him upon such a mad display of Quixotic courage and personal daring as a counterbalance to the enormous wealth he was known to possess ; by the attractions of which he had induced Miss Madeleine Graham to inflict so public a slight upon him as she had, in the transference of herself from his barge to the millionaire's boat. And that Madeleine herself—like a cruel, heartless coquette as she was—had provoked and challenged him to the absurd display, much as the lady who flung the glove to the lion,—indifferent

to the results in every respect saving to enhance her own consequence, and stir the pretendants to her favour to still more exasperated recklessness of rivalry.

Mr. Behringbright had replied, he stated, to all this frenzied declamation as calmly as he possibly could. He assured Lord Glengariff that up to the moment of her assenting to his request to join him—and for several minutes after—Miss Graham was entirely ignorant that he was any thing but what he represented himself,—a commercial agent of his own house; that nothing had ever given him greater pain and annoyance than his young friend's public—but no doubt without real drift or meaning—pursuit of Miss Graham: who, on her own part, was most thoroughly convinced that he meant nothing by it, except to amuse himself, or divert his mind from an uncomfortable recollection of another. She wished to express her sense of this by publicly declining the public but unreal homage offered to her; but no imaginable slight of which he could have legitimate reason to complain. So decisive a mark of preference banished all notion of coquetry on her part in the action with which he found so much fault; and he, Mr. Behringbright, was most happy to be enabled to state that he was assured he *was* the object of the young lady's most decided preference.

"But you may judge, dear Madeleine," the lover continued, with almost a blush of womanish modesty overspreading his honest visage, "how near to a state of lunacy poor Glengariff must be, and what patience I had to display, when upon that he burst into the most frantic expressions you ever heard;—that I must be an enchanter, a magician, and bewitched the women with some kind of philtre and love-charm to dote upon me in the way they did! And he absolutely had the ridiculous insanity to yell to me that he was aware I was a libertine of the worst order, under a cloak of virtue and sobriety, and that I meditated adding *your* disgrace and ruin to my other triumphs!"

Mr. Behringbright paused, quite breathless with indignant emotion as he uttered the words; yet he, too, could

not avoid joining in the peal of laughter into which Madeleine burst as she listened to them—laughter as musical and sweet as a peal of Lancashire bells; only he thought it was a little too prolonged and incessant.

"Never mind, dearest; it *is* funny; but, after all, the jocularly is not quite of the mirth-provocative order," Mr. Behringbright said, gently interrupting the outburst. "But of course, in Glengariff's excited condition, I could not be irritated; and I thought the best way to calm him would be to dispel the idea in the plainest and most direct manner; and so I told him that, on ascertaining that you could and did prefer me to all other men, I had made you an offer of marriage,—which you had accepted."

"That was right, perfectly right, dear Mr. Behringbright. I did not wish our engagement to be too universally declared until—until—papa and mamma had given their sanction," Madeleine answered, rather confusedly, upon this, finding she was expected to say something. "But you would then see immediately, from the coolness with which he would receive the intelligence, that he never was at all in earnest in the attentions he paid to me."

"I don't think he ever was, dear Madeleine," returned her lover, with a gratified expression so far as regarded that; "but the idea he went off upon immediately on hearing the avowal was more extraordinarily frenzied and out-of-the-way than all his former ravings. He turned to his mother, who was beside him, sitting at his pillow-head, and exclaimed, 'There, dear mother! I am sure the *dream* that has haunted me so often and so long is founded in realities; and nothing but Emily's own declaration, face to face with Mr. Behringbright, and in my presence, shall remove the certainty I all but possess from my heart!'"

"The *dream*!" replied Madeleine, really now astonished, and turning a little pale. "What dream?"

"It appears that he has dreamed (all the Glengariffs are a strangely visionary and superstitious people)—I don't know how often or in what form, but I believe in many—that Emily Maughan is the victim of some most treacherous and improper procedure; that she is, some-

how or other, entangled in the mazes of some very vicious person or persons, who has either plotted or secured her destruction. I am sure I don't know which, for he refuses to enter into any clear elucidations of the subject. But would you believe it, my love! my Madeleine!" continued Mr. Behringbright, with much emotion, "from his amazing demeanour towards myself personally, from hints he formerly dropped, from some obscure intimations from Dr. Bucktrout, but, above all, from the remarkable resolution his mother has expressed, I am led to believe that he fancies in me the detestable secret seducer of the young girl whose protector and zealous friend I have been—but nothing more!—and that I am now sacrificing her to a fresher object of my licentious and despicably changeful and villanous passions!"

Madeleine Graham herself did stare in utter amazement at this revelation; and even a sense of the ludicrous seemed irresistibly to mingle with all the tragedy and discomfort of the position. Mr. Behringbright thought he distinguished a faint giggle in her accents as, after a pause, she remarked:

"But you could easily dissipate so preposterous an idea—which even delirium could scarcely account for Lord Glengariff's forming—by stating the real object of Emily's partiality,—this Frenchman—this Camille Le Tellier."

"I did so, as soon as I could really make up my mind to the conviction that I was glanced at," replied Mr. Behringbright; "but I could perceive nothing but incredulity and distrust in the young man's expressions and manner. Emily's reply to his offer of marriage, he said, he had studied over a thousand times, and found to conceal the hint of a terrific enigma, which could only be solved in the way he proposed, he concluded in the most determined style; that is to say, by Emily declaring to him in my presence the actual and true state of things, and the reason of her rejection of so advantageous an offer!"

"In your presence!—Emily!" faintly ejaculated Madeleine.

"Yes; but you have not heard the strangest and wildest of it all yet! Thereupon Glengariff turned to his mother, and adjured her—as she wished him to retain a desire to live, or to submit to the means by which his life might be preserved, or as she would administer to his dying hour the only consolation of which it was capable—to fulfil this greatest wish of his soul; and to procure that Emily Maughan should be summoned to this solemn ordeal and judgment with the least possible delay!"

"Good heavens! What an incredulous madman! Surely his mother's only answer would be to assure him that he was as mad as herself, and beg those present to put him in a strait-jacket!" Madeleine exclaimed, in horror.

"Not at all, Madeleine. As you say, I do believe mother and son are as mad one as the other; for the countess immediately declared to her son that, if it was in human power to obtain for him the wish he expressed, it should be done, happen what might in the result!"

"They ought both to be restrained."

"There is no power to do it; and perhaps the indulgence of their frenzy is the best—the only means of obviating its disastrous results," said Mr. Behringbright.

"But Emily will not come,—I am sure she will not come!"

"I do not know that, Madeleine. It is to a deathbed, perchance, she is summoned,—the deathbed of a man young, brave, kind, and honest, who has loved her—who she knows has loved her—with all the power and purity of an uncorrupt and manly heart. She can hardly refuse so slight a return for so much generosity and fidelity, asked with the zeal and persuasion I have reason to believe it will be!"

"No; she scarcely can—she scarcely can!" exclaimed Madeleine, clasping her hands with a despair and wildness of gesture that startled and astonished Mr. Behringbright. "Perhaps, indeed, she ought not!—No one has more influence with her than I have. My absence from this part of the country has become desirable. I ought to let my father and mother know of the great engagement I have formed. I will return at once to Belfast.

I will beg, I will implore, I will force Emily to comply with the poor, noble, unhappy young fellow's dying request!"

"There is no need, Madeleine. To crown the whole amazement of the affair, Lord Glengariff has obstinately refused to trust the delivery of his appeal and supplication to the fidelity of any but one messenger and agent; and that messenger and agent is his mother!"

"His mother!"

"His mother, Lady Glengariff—the countess herself. Why do you look with such astonishment at me, my dear girl?"

"His mother! What! his mother leave her dying son on such an errand—his mother! It is impossible! Were his mother a thousand times a madwoman, she could not consent to such a proceeding!" almost screeched Madeleine.

"But it is the case that she has consented to start immediately on this mission to Belfast," said Mr. Behringbright, who knew not, by any means, that in the words he was pronouncing a sentence of death. "I left her busied in preparation for departure when I came away from Glengariff this morning, attended by her faithful serving-woman and the steward, Mr. Molloy. And as I have also written a letter to be delivered to Emily, I may say ordering her to comply with the injunctions contained, by all the authority I can have over her as a friend and guardian, I do not doubt the countess will return at the utmost speed of railway and express, in time to gratify her son in this most fantastical but, at the same time, apparently life-and-soul-concerning caprice."

"You, Mr. Behringbright? You?"

"Yes, I, dearest Madeleine. How else could I better show my innocence of so calumnious a misapprehension—my willingness to abide every investigation into my conduct and motives with regard to Emily Maughan?"

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Behringbright," said Madeleine, with singular fierceness, a glare of scorn and contemptuous rebuke in her whole manner, which most unpleasantly affected Mr. Behringbright, "that you will

be bated at the stake in this manner at the pleasure of a madman and a madwoman, who dishonour and insult you by so atrocious a suspicion?"

"If they are mad, their doings are not to be regarded as worthy of attention in such strong lights, Miss Graham," returned Mr. Behringbright, not a little offendedly. "And even if their suspicions are irrational, they will be best confuted by a calm and unmistakable elucidation of the truth. Such I take to be the solemn clearance from every imputation of the sort which Emily Maughan will not fail to afford me."

"But you do not know—oh, Mr. Behringbright, you do not know the full horror of the position!" now exclaimed Madeleine, in sheer desperation, driven to place the climax on all her evildoings against Emily Maughan. "You do not know what I know—what has induced me to be so urgent and immediate with you to marry, and remove to a distant scene, Emily and the man who—the man who, as she had confessed to me herself in heart-broken anguish, is the seducer of her unguarded youth—the father of an unborn heir of shame and betrayal!"

Mr. Behringbright appeared even more aghast than the unhappy girl herself who spoke, and who looked the very picture of horror and dismay, when he heard the words.

"Ah, indeed—this explains all!" he then exclaimed, quite dizzily, as if he had received an actual blow. "Poor Emily! But how otherwise could she have refused a glorious young hero of a man—an earl—like Glengariff, for this sorry Frenchman?"

"Who is here, resident in Killarney!—How will he suffer you to bring a woman in such a situation, all but his wife, to the bedside of a dying man who declares himself to be her lover, to acquit a third of a suspicion which never could have any existence but in the brain of madness, yet dishonours equally almost all parties concerned?" said Madeleine.

"You are right, my darling love! How wise, how prudent, how all you ought to be, you are! I will hurry back at once to Glengariff, to prevent such a crowning exposure! Even if it kills Glengariff, it is better that he

should know the worst finally—at once—without further haggling of pretence to spare his feelings. But this detestable wretch of a Frenchman! Never—no, never shall the betrayer of a woman's confidence—so prodigious a betrayer—reap the reward of his crimes from me! Women have not been good to me hitherto—they have injured me; but you, dearest Madeleine, have restored me to all my belief and confidence in the sex! I consider myself the champion now as well as the guardian of that poor, weak, wronged girl; and though I will compel the villain to make her all the reparation marriage can, it is on her, and her alone, that I will confer and fix the benefits I had always intended when the occasion should arise. But oh, how little did I think it would come in such a form!"

And Mr. Behringbright—albeit unused to such effusions of sensibility—fairly burst into a paroxysm of tears and sobs.

But Madeleine exhibited an unusual sternness, not to say harshness and peremptoriness, in her manner.

"This is unworthy of you, Mr. Behringbright!" she said, with a species of contemptuous asperity. "You are womanish in your grief! You will almost give countenance to Lord Glengariff's mad suspicions, if you go on so. For heaven's sake, lose not a moment in hastening to prevent this frantic journey—certain to end in the most dreadful exposures—on the part of Lady Glengariff."

"I will not lose a moment, dearest—not a moment!" said Mr. Behringbright, himself strangely overawed and coerced by the concentrated power of will and emotion in the young woman's whole demeanour and tone. "Forgive me these tears; they are unmanly, I know; but it grieves me so to the heart. I did so much respect Emily, for what I imagined her purity and goodness! It is enough to finish up what remained to me of faith in woman, only that you are a woman as well as an angel; and I can always find an anchorage for faith in your beloved heart. Hold, dearest, before I go! I had almost forgotten, but I have brought you the ring with which the representative of our family has, in all times since we have possessed jewels and ornaments of price, pledged his

faith to his betrothed bride! It is the great Behring-bright Diamond, the choicest of all my grandfather's stores, who traded in these bright stones when he wedded his wife! Here it is; and thus I plight you, Madeleine Graham, mine!"

So saying, the wealthy heir of a wealthy race produced a ring from his waistcoat pocket—the dazzling glitter of the gems with which it was set fairly lighting up his hand as he did so—and placed it on what is called, in lovers' parlance, "the engaged finger" of Madeleine Graham's white and beautifully-shaped small hand.

In good truth, the betrothed bride's eye flashed with more than equal brilliancy as she received the precious gift; and thoroughly did she mean it as she exclaimed, firmly clenching that little hand,—

"And I will perish sooner than relinquish this pledge of my dearest future husband's love!"

A passionate embrace responded (this scene took place in the Bucktrout's private apartment, whence the aunt had withdrawn on some necessary business as soon as Mr. Behringbright presented himself)—a renewal of promises, pledges, what not, of eternal love and fidelity; and then at last the much-consolated lover was prevailed upon to hurry back to Glengariff on his errand.

He was hardly out of the room before Madeleine rushed to the bell.

"When's the next post north, Rooney?" she exclaimed, breathlessly, as the waiter entered.

"It's after wanting five minutes, and perhaps half as many again till the bags are sealed out," he replied. "So if your young leddyship is in a hurry, you had better wait till the next. And I take the *importunity* to tell your leddyship [Madeleine had been raised to the peerage by general consent of the hotel servants since it was known she was to marry a man worth a million of money] that I have made the inquiry she wished for, and find there is a foreign lady, with a fine bonnet and shawl, that calls herself Madame Loriôt, staying for a night and a day at the Muckcross."

"Very well, Rooney. But I cannot lose this post.

Ink and paper instantly! and be ready to rush out the moment I am ready. You shall be well paid for your trouble."

"It's niver doubting your honour's ladyship I'll be!" grinned the worthy fellow, "with that ring on your finger, that beats the sun and all the little stars themselves for shining."

"And then I shall want a car for Muckcross!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LADY GLENGARIFF "EN ROUTE."

THE letter Madeleine found it so necessary to lose no time in despatching was to her mother, Lady Graham, in Belfast.

It was very businesslike and brief, as suited the exigency. It contained the pleasing announcement that she had succeeded in the great enterprise on which she had left for Killarney. The millionaire had proposed; she had accepted him, *of course*, and he was to set out immediately to make his wishes known to her papa. He might be expected at once in Belfast, for he was *terribly in love*, and as anxious as any one could possibly be to complete the affair, and make her his dear, happy wife, and *all that*. But meanwhile, Madeleine went on to say, underlining almost every other word, she had discovered that that *artful creature*, Emily Maughan, who pretended to be so *artless*, had been all along *making love* to *poor Mr. Behringbright!* He had had the greatest difficulty to *parry* her designs even before she came over to Ireland. In fact, he had sent her there on purpose to get rid of her *lovmaking*, when the creature—as every one knew—had directly set her cap at *poor young Lord Glengariff*, and cajoled him into making such a senseless, ridiculous exhibition of himself—trailing over the country after her, and behaving in every other respect like a madman. And now, as Emily would be sure to fly into a fury at the final escape of such a splendid chance as Mr. Behringbright—

and was plainly a *girl of no principles*—nothing was likelier than, if she saw Mr. Behringbright, she would endeavour to *spoil everything* by revealing all about that foolish affair, which mamma would of course remember—that made papa so angry—with the French clerk or something of that sort, who annoyed them all the last winter with his attentions to her, silly girl, that knew no better, if mamma had not so fortunately stopped things in time, by telling of their meeting one another at the Rock. *That* would destroy all that had been done. Mr. Behringbright was such a curious, particular kind of a man in the temper, she dared not even let him know how fond she was of *him*. Therefore her mother must find some pretence *instantly* to give *Miss Maughan* her dismissal from Belhaven Square, and, if possible, from Belfast itself.

If she could by any means see such a meddling, reckless person *shipped off* direct for England—Madeleine went on with her rapid pen to assure her mother—it would be of *immense advantage*—make every thing so delightfully *safe*! And the thing most likely to prevail upon Emily to go *at once* would be to tell her of the intended match being appointed to take place directly they returned to Belfast—that they were on the way, and that Mr. Behringbright expressly *hoped* and *desired* Emily would leave the town, and Ireland also, before his arrival. Emily herself was very well aware of *reasons that would render it very painful for Mr. Behringbright to see her*. And mamma might say so, and urge it upon her in a way that she could understand; because really *the woman* made it no secret to Mr. Behringbright himself that she was *after him*, hoping, perhaps, to coax him that way into having her—like a poor mouse that is too frightened to run when it knows the cat is springing! Papa might furnish her with any money she required to go, and could say Mr. Behringbright desired him to *let her have it*. That would be sure to satisfy Miss Maughan, if any thing could, that her room was more desired *than her company*.

All this was clear enough. But, besides, Madeleine was aware her mother would comprehend the necessity of the move—not quite so well, certainly, as herself, but

very well indeed. There had been an infinite deal of pother and mischief already in the family about this Frenchman and his pretensions; which latter had been most ignominiously vetoed by the paternal authority long previously.

This letter despatched in time for the departing post, with Rooney's coöperation, Madeleine was free to hope that it might be of some use in clearing the embarrassed front of her position.

It was decidedly of the most vital importance to get Emily Maughan's fixed but ever-threatening corps removed from the sloping of the hills! After the last crowning calumnies the peril of confutation was sadly increased for our able young friend. Whatever plans were hit upon with regard to Le Tellier (and Madeleine herself hoped nothing was as yet positively decided on there!), all was useless unless Emily was *also* safely removed out of the way.

In the beginning, Madeleine had felt some reluctance in her own mind to the harm she did this orphan and homeless girl, who had been her school friend, and whom she could not help respecting for her pure, candid, and gentle-hearted nature. She had found it necessary, it is true, for her own purposes, to do her a little mischief at first—not very much. What could it matter to Emily Maughan if Mr. Behringbright was misled into the belief that she had a handsome young Frenchman for a sweet-heart? He meant nothing by her, himself! Madeleine did not intend to follow on with any further damage. But she had been *compelled*. Still, each new injury had been a nuisance and a trouble to inflict. This was over now. Every thing, Madeleine felt, was of inferior consequence to her own preservation. It was the first law of nature, and must be obeyed as necessarily as those other laws called Hunger and Thirst. She scrupled, she hesitated at nothing now; nay, I believe she began to hate Emily, for the trouble she was obliged to take in achieving the poor girl's ruin! Her acts were no longer the dispassionate exequaturs of a great statesman or general, obliged to sacrifice a province or a regiment to obtain some

object of policy or attack. Yes ; Madeleine Graham now *hated* her victim—hated her for her goodness, for her knowledge of her secrets, for her being so truly loved by Lord Glengariff—for all the lies, in fine, that she, Madeleine, had been obliged to invent against her, and for the terrible difficulties in which they had involved the inventor. I am not sure, indeed, but what she grew to be indignant at Emily for not being in reality the lost wretch she represented her. There seemed a kind of defiance and mockery in her persisting *not* to be the weak and fallen creature she was said to be, but a brave, pure, calm, and high-minded young woman ; something audacious and detestably ill-natured in Emily *not* having incurred the guilt and disgrace attempted to be fastened upon her, and which were so dangerous to another party's views of aggrandisement and wealth!—in her *not* being Madeleine Graham, in short.

Madeleine was, in fact, half mad with selfishness and fear—not wholly so, or there might have been some excuse for her. She was not mad enough, for example, to dream any longer of a likelihood in the saving plan she had once lulled her fears with the chance of being able to realise for all parties : marry Camille Le Tellier!—Emily Maughan marry Camille Le Tellier ! The vague hopes she might possibly once have cherished in this respect had vanished on the least rational consideration. Camille himself, with all his vanity, ridiculed the notion. Immeasurably absurd ! Madeleine began to perceive that she had, in some strange way, bedazed herself with her own falsehoods, and had half believed in the necessities of the imaginary position in which her calumnies had placed Emily Maughan.

Had there been a shadow of a hope towards this extrication, that other alternative would never have been looming so fast into such tremendous, horizon-closing proportions!—so that not the faintest glimmering of light seemed likely shortly to remain, until the great clearance could be made!—Not with the axe, indeed!—*nous avons changé tout cela*. Clytemnestra would never have thought of making so butcherlike a job of it, if she had lived in our days, with her opportunities in preparing her lord's

meals, according to the custom of queens and other ladies of quality in the times of Troy's overthrow by "Argive Helen's rosy-fingered hand!"

It would make very little difference, Madeleine considered, if even Lord Glengariff and his mother were induced by that last dreadful scandal to abandon their purposed explanation face to face with Emily Maughan. Camille, with his inordinate vanity and pretensions, would never submit to the only terms Mr. Behringbright had announced his inflexible resolution to grant to the supposed betrayer of the honour of his ward. If this audacious imputation had saved her one way, it had, therefore, destroyed her another. And so it began to be clearer and clearer to Madeleine, that she was quite right in giving in her adhesion to some such imperative power as destiny. Surely there was a destiny at work in her case! What *could* she do but what she was doing, and must go on doing? Madeleine did not reflect that she had first lost the control of her will by its exercise, and that it is the very Nemesis of crime that—

"Each step
Doth force his sequent, and still hurrying on,
Breaks the waverer's knees!"

But it was speedily evident to her that no part of the logical consequences of her original departure from truth and fair-dealing was to be spared her. She was about to go down to the car she had ordered to take her on that important errand to see her dear, but somewhat of late neglected friend, staying at The Muckcross, when Mr. Behringbright returned to interrupt the excursion, with the formidable addition in his company of the Countess of Glengariff.

He explained to Madeleine that he had met with this lady on his way to the castle, coming from it in a post-chaise, with luggage and attendants, on her route to the railway-station in Killarney, whence she was to proceed at once on her errand to Emily Maughan in Belfast.

Mr. Behringbright also explained that he had left his own vehicle for the countess's, and had endeavoured to prevail upon her to abandon the frantic expedition, in the

first place, by remonstrances on its folly and inexpediency. But the countess's dry and haughty manner, and expression of her determination to proceed, obliged him to declare all he knew—all the full guilt and entanglement of Emily Maughan's position with her French lover.

And the countess was certainly, for several moments, thunderstruck with the revelation. She even went so far as to order her postillion to turn his horses' heads—but on a sudden changed her mind; and going off apparently on some wild hallucination of her son's jealousy, she inquired, in so suspicious a manner, whether Mr. Behringbright himself was the authority for so dreadful a statement?—and if so, how he came to be in the confidence of a young woman to so shameful an extent, who ought to have died rather to keep her secret to herself?—that he felt compelled to inform her Miss Graham was the divulger of the mystery, and the sole confidante in question!—driven thereto by the headlong course events had entered upon, and the certainty of a more disastrous and heartrending exposure that must otherwise ensue.

And yet, Mr. Behringbright declared, the countess seemed as far as ever from being satisfied by this declaration.

"She always disliked you, dearest," he said, tenderly pressing Madeleine's hand. "From the first her mind was the seat of all manner of ridiculous fancies and prejudices, only excusable on the ground of its total want of balance, and her long seclusion from the world and matters of fact and reality. And, besides, it is plain she still works upon her son's strange frenzy respecting my relations with Miss Maughan. In short, she insists on seeing you, and hearing from your own lips your reasons for the assertions I have made, on my perfect conviction that you have declared—most reluctantly declared—only the deplorable truth about poor Emily. Her ladyship is waiting below with great impatience, as the next train northward is about to start. But I would not allow her to fling herself unprepared upon you. Will you see her now?"

"Certainly," said Madeleine, looking so white and quivery that Mr. Behringbright himself was disturbed and

smitten with a slight feeling of distrust. "Only I suppose her ladyship will as little believe me, on my word, as any of the family seem to believe you, Mr. Behringbright! Is it not confirmation enough that Le Tellier has asked the young lady's hand of you?—and that, although he had not the boldness to propose them to you, to me he has the most exacting and preposterous terms as the conditions of his carrying out the overture?"

Mr. Behringbright shook his head. "For aught I know, they may fancy even *that* an invention of mine," he remarked, with an indignant though contemptuous smile. "Nay, the countess plainly declared to me her son was so convinced of the omnipotence of cash in my case, that he would probably take it into his head I had *bought* a husband for my victim, in order to remove her creditably out of the path of my present alliance. For I think they do begin to believe, dearest, I am in earnest in my intention to marry you!"

"Let her ladyship come, then, and I will endeavour to satisfy her," said Madeleine, still much embarrassed; but a sudden thought occurred to her, and lighted up her brilliant eyes, though with a sparkle not certes caught from on high. "Let her come!" she added, in a firmer tone. "I think I shall be able to convince even a crazy woman like this countess that I do not speak altogether at random and without proof."

Accordingly the Countess of Glengariff—whose haughty sense of social superiority was severely chafed by being obliged to await the pleasure of a young girl of the "commercial classes"—was summoned and escorted upstairs to an audience by Mr. Behringbright. Nor was she greatly mollified at being met at the top of the landing-place, as if by a contemporary princess, by Miss Graham. Indeed, her ladyship behaved almost rudely—pushed past Miss Graham without extending her hand, or acknowledging her presence otherwise than by a stern nod—and flinging herself, unasked, into a chair, turned all the haggard, aristocratic terrors of her visage on the party who was to submit to an examination.

Madeleine bore this gaze unblenchingly, though she

did not like it, and respectfully declined the chair Mr. Behringbright drew for her. That gentleman then withdrew, to leave the ladies to an unreserved communication on the delicate subjects likely to form the discussion. He had previously stipulated that neither Nora nor Mr. Molloy, who were with the countess, should form any part of the auditory.

For some moments after this departure, Lady Glengariff continued to stare as harshly and fixedly at Madeleine as before, who felt very uncomfortable under the scrutiny. But she rallied meanwhile. "After all," she said to herself, "this is only an old, withered mad-woman, though she is called Countess of Glengariff, and is a great lady at Killarney! I am surely a match for her!"

And so the countess found. Questioned, Miss Graham replied, with only so much quaver and hesitation as might naturally be expected in a young lady of delicate sentiments, compelled to betray so sad a confidence on the part of a friend—but more circumstantially than she had deemed it necessary or advisable to Mr. Behringbright—with what she pathetically called "the whole miserable truth."

Poor, dear, unhappy Emily had confessed it all to her dear friend and schoolfellow when they last parted in Belfast, in a burst of frantic grief, imploring her to second the application which Monsieur Le Tellier had with difficulty—now that he had attained his wicked ends—been induced to promise to make to her guardian! She had been obliged to confess all, on Madeleine's entreating her to allow her *time* to bring the matter about; for every day, in spite of the cleverest arts at concealment, increased the danger of a discovery of her shame! Her seducer himself had shown alarming symptoms of shrinking from his engagements, and would doubtless require a heavy bribe to keep him in adherence even to his own proposals. "Still Emily," the undaunted girl continued, "did not confess the truth until she was driven to it by visible necessity; for she accidentally dropped a note which declared the state of affairs in a manner not to be mistaken, and which I myself, as accidentally finding, felt bound to call upon her for explanation on." And this note—Miss Graham now declared—she had still

in her possession, and was willing to submit to her ladyship's judgment.

The countess eagerly assented; and Madeleine withdrew, to seek out the document from among some other papers, she said, she had brought with her, to verify any statements she might find it necessary to make on the subject to Mr. Behringbright.

She took care to be absent, seeking for this voucher, ample time to allow of the departure of the mail-train with her letter to her mother. She then returned with the first specimen of those epistles she had ordered Camille to address to her under the name of Emily Maughan. This contained, as the reader may possibly remember, the statement of his intention to seek out Mr. Behringbright, and obtain his concurrence in their union. But I may have omitted to mention that it was a letter which bore upon its every word utter condemnation for the woman to whom it was written.

With knitted brows and severest aspect—an aspect Rhadamanthus or Minos might have thought not unbefitting the exercise of their own judicial duties—the countess perused the whole epistle from beginning to end.

Madeleine confidently expected judgment in favour of her veracity as the result of this scrutiny. But, like some other very, very clever persons, she had overlooked a trifle of some importance to the general stability of her edifice.

“This letter would have been decisive, but for one remarkable circumstance, which gives rise to a notion confirmatory of my son's opinion that some duplicity is at work in the transaction,” said the countess, with a stern clearness of deduction that showed she was thoroughly in one of her lucid intervals. “I have always understood, Miss Graham, that you did not know Mr. Behringbright *was* Mr. Behringbright until he made to you the declaration of his intentions on the day of my son's accident. How, then, am I to suppose Miss Maughan implored your interposition with a man whose position with regard to her, and in the world in general, was unknown to you at the date of this intercepted letter?”

This was a fixer,—or would have been for most people. It did rather puzzle Madeleine Graham, but not much or long.

"Emily, of course, was acquainted with the true identity of Mr. *Behringbright*, under the name of *Brownjohn*; and perceiving the great kindness and affection he took for me at once on his visit at my father's house, and knowing we were likely to meet again on the lakes—anticipating all, in reality, that has come to pass—she secured my interest with Mr. *Behringbright* in advance."

The countess smiled—a strangely lurid and sarcastic smile.

"You are ready with your answer, Miss Graham," she said. "However, I am more than ever satisfied that my son's tormenting dreams are founded in actualities!—You look surprised, and perhaps you have a right to feel so. We *Glengariffs* are confessedly not the most sober-judging people in the world; and yet our inspirations serve us sometimes as well as the boasted sanity of judgment of other people. And now I declare to you, that unless you wish me to get you to repeat your explanation in the presence of Mr. *Behringbright*, you must allow me to retain possession of this letter until I can confront Emily with its evidence. She may reasonably refuse to be condemned, even on her *friend's* unsupported statements against her! But no impudence can explain away this fact, if it is a fact; and of course, if it is so, I am not the messenger to bring pollution of the kind to the deathbed of my noble son, even if Emily's refusal, and admission of her guilt in so doing, anticipates for him, by a brief period, the stroke of doom!"

Madeleine certainly made no objection to this impounding of the document—on her own account—under the penalty announced. But, on behalf of her dear friend, she most warmly and generously pleaded that she really could not allow it; that it would kill her beloved Emily to be subjected to such an ordeal! The more she pleaded to the contrary, however, the more inexorable the countess showed herself in her resolve.

"I have promised my son I will not look in his face again until I have seen Emily, and won her consent to the great ordeal proposed, if it be possible to attain it. It is not likely I shall succeed under these circumstances; I do

not desire to succeed. But I must keep my promise to Lord Glengariff!—I must, I say! Armed with this document, I will go at once to Belfast, and, happen what may, will fulfil my word to my dying son!”

“The revelation will kill him! But have your own will, madam; you will have a long journey for nothing!” said Madeleine, spitefully.

“No; it is the *suspense*—the doubt—that torments him which, much more than the fever of his wound, is wearing my son into his grave!” the countess replied, with increased asperity. “And to show that I believe so, I will immediately write to him the full particulars of what I have thus far ascertained, that he may know the very worst. Mr. Behringbright will confirm to him, at all events, the fact of the Frenchman’s arrival in Killarney, and proposal for Emily; I shall request him to do so. But do not fear, Miss Graham, that I will reveal to Mr. Behringbright, *at present*, any thing that may casually shake his confidence in the disinterested and reciprocal quality of the affection you have inspired him with. This letter I retain as the price of my discretion.”

Madeleine smiled scornfully, but was secretly much annoyed at her own oversight in what she had intended to prove so capital a manœuvre. However, she considered she had a remedy in store for all.

Meanwhile, she *had* effected one great object. Her letter—as there was no other but a special train now to be procured for the rest of the day from Killarney—would reach Belfast some time before the countess. There was a good chance that Emily might be expelled and out of the way before Lady Glengariff’s arrival. Her mother, she knew, made aware of a pressing exigency in the case, was a woman of energetic action when she pleased. But if even Emily was, unhappily, still on the spot, ready to make all the confusion in her power, there was no danger that could not be obviated if only Camille—Camille!—were removed from the possibility of adding his malicious or cowardly evidence to a discovery of the truth.

The postscript—the forged postscript—to Lady Glengariff’s invitation to the fugitive governess to return, what

did that matter? It *was* in her ladyship's handwriting. She was known to be proud to excess—to have always disapproved of her son's attachment—to be subject to intervals of insanity. She might deny the written words as much as she thought proper: opinion would go in favour of their authenticity. The great fact of Camille having asked Emily in marriage would always remain, and if meanwhile he died of some *sudden attack*—some disorder of the stomach (and he was subject to such)—all Emily's denial henceforth would stand for little: attempts to save her own credit, when it was useless any longer to admit her errors, with a view to the best remaining remedy.

Still there was no time to be lost. And so, as soon as Mr. Behringbright set out to accompany Lady Glengariff, who had determined on a special train, to the railway-station—which he seemed to desire—Miss Graham resumed her own original plan, and proceeded on a drive to the Muckross Abbey Hotel.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A GRAND JUNCTION.

It is a beautiful drive, that, from Prospect Palace to Muckross Abbey, along the skirts of Kenmare Woods, and the lovely inner bend of Castle Lough Bay. And it was a most delightful morning—the sky as clearly blue and lighted with the sun as if clouds and mists were unknown things on the Lakes of Killarney—when Madeleine Graham emerged on her excursion. But Madeleine Graham was decidedly going to Muckross Abbey on business, not on pleasure. She took scarcely any note of what she saw of the charms of nature, arrayed in the transparent cloth-of-gold of the day-beam. I believe she was even hardly gratified when, arriving at the Muckross Hotel, and stepping into its capacious hall, her distinguished appearance and beauty excited the attention of several groups of persons lounging and chatting with the affable hostess and her attendant barmaids. But Madeleine really did look very

well, in her flowing morning dress, and with her coquetish plumed hat on, and her veil half flung back, revealing her earnest and excited physiognomy, rich in colour and character—though this last probably not exactly of the most attractive and femininely soft of possible aspects at the moment. A wandering harper, who was playing “The Last Rose of Summer” to all whom he could get to listen—like a minstrel of old—in the hall, seemed involuntarily to change the air as she came in to something a good deal wilder and more irregular and defying in movement: as if he comprehended intuitively that the plaintive and the pathetic were not the style of melody to wheedle a reward out of this new-comer.

Madeleine, however, took no notice whatever of the bard or his minstrelsy. She inquired for a French lady staying at the hotel—a French lady who came the night before—Madame Loriôt she believed. Madeleine did not know by what name her friend chose to be known on her present peregrination, but the description, she thought, would hit her. And so it did. “Oh yes, ma’m; a French lady—a play-actress, or something of that sort. She’s only got a bed-room; didn’t want a sitting-room—leastways, not a private one. Who shall I say’s called?”

“Miss Graham—Miss Madeleine Graham, of Belfast.”

It was lucky, however, for Miss Madeleine Graham of Belfast’s chances of seeing her friend, that she determined to tread fast on the slatternly heels of the chambermaid who went to announce her. The abigail, knocking at a door on the third story labelled “Kate Mavourneen,” and delivering her message to an unseen interlocutrix within, who unlocked the door, but held it nearly closed in hand, received for reply, after a short pause of doubtful import—“*Mees Madeleine Graham!* But I know no such person in Killarney who does not know me in Belfast!”

“Oh yes, you do—you do, dear Olympe,” said the applicant, pushing the door open, almost by force, and entering. “That will do, young woman; Madame knows me; we will ring if we want any thing. And now, my best Olympe, do you *not* know me—your dear old pupil of yore, Madeleine Graham?” the young lady inquired, in

the kindest and most familiar manner, and making as if she would throw her arms around her *ci-devant* friend and instructress of the Sparx Gymgynæcium.

But Mademoiselle Loriôt stepped back with a most theatrical air of dignity and repulse, "What are you?—what do you mean?" she exclaimed. "I am me, it is true; but Madeleine Graham, I know her no longer! I do not desire to know her! Pardon me; my time is of importance, and I am engaged at present in the duties of my toilette!"

This latter statement was visibly correct, and a rather strange figure Mademoiselle Loriôt cut in the operation. It has been said that nothing more completely disenchant the eye of adoration than the sight of a human being, male or female, in its nightcap. But really the spectacle of a Frenchwoman, prematurely old with dissipation, before rouging and bewigging up for society, is something to disenchant one of humanity altogether. And such was Mademoiselle Loriôt's haggish and withered aspect as she stood, in her majestic attitude of repulse, in a showy chinz dressing-gown, with naked feet, almost bald-headed, and looking the very incarnation of spite and ill-temper at her blooming visitor, that I am sure it would have justified all mankind's turning hermit, and refusing thenceforth and for ever all society and resort with the fair sex.

"Oh yes, you do know me—you shall know me, dear Olympe, now that we are in a place where it is no longer necessary for me to conceal the great affection I have for you!" still Madeleine nobly persevered. "Killarney is not Belfast; people don't go about in iron stays here; and the moment I heard you had arrived on the lakes, I determined to call upon you, and remind you of old times, dear! And let us talk in French, too, and I will show you I have not forgotten any thing you taught me!"

And she would have embraced Mademoiselle, but again Mademoiselle would not permit it; nay, she drew back with an air of heightened repugnance.

"Ah, then, I comprehend but too well what is otherwise inexplicable—Camille Le Tellier's appearance in Killarney!" she cried. "The *perfid*e pursues you always;

and you have shamefully deceived me in pretending that this worthless heart is not made the victim of your treacherous attractions, but has transferred itself to another! Hold, Miss Graham! It is an indignity—an insult a thousand times repeated you offer me—when, not satisfied with your triumph, you seek to parade it before me, and to display in chains a captive whose appearance recalls to me the saddest and most degrading episode of my life.

“You are mistaken, Olympe! If you will but hear me, I will convince you of your mistake. Meanwhile, do not let me interrupt your dressing: we used often to watch each other dress, you know, when we were at the Misses Sparx’ humbug academy, and you taught me a good deal then in that way, and must know more yourself now!” wheedled Madeleine, seating herself, with an air of remaining, beside the chamber-mirror—the table before which was largely strewed with cosmetics, rouge-pots, pomades, enamel paste, violet powder-balls, and aromatic essences, from the Frenchwoman’s open travelling-case.

“But I repeat to you, this is an intrusion, Miss Graham! I no longer seek, I no longer desire, your society,” resumed Mademoiselle Loriôt, with great vehemence. “And that you may believe so, I will tell you what it has occurred to me to ascertain! You forbade me your house, you repudiated my tenderness, and you assured me that the devotion of this *infâme* was transferred to another!—to a certain Miss Emily Maughan, become, through misfortune, a governess in your father’s upstart family. Well, I remember that this Emily Maughan—once herself esteemed rich—had always, nevertheless, been of an amenity and kindness of disposition not to be surpassed. Some calumnies had been raised against her at the Sparx Gynécée, it is true, and, nevertheless, she had never made mischief there. It was you and I that made all the mischief there that was made! Witness that affair of the betrayal of the poor cook and party in the kitchen, of which Miss Emily was always unconscious—which we had both, in a degree, shared—and yet divulged!

“I have compassion, I say, on this innocent young girl, when I hear she is likely, in her turn, to become the

victim of the changeable caprices of a man without heart, without honour, without remorse—who sacrifices women, without scruple, to the demands of his self-love and gratification, wherever he encounters folly equal to his presumption! *You* had denied me the entrance of your father's house, no doubt; but Miss Maughan had not denied me her master's. I resolve to call upon her, and ascertain, if possible, the true position of affairs!—I do so. I am received with every sign of an amiable welcome, in spite of the visible traces of misfortune in my appearance—in spite of the signs of a secret and overwhelming chagrin which are imprinted on Miss Maughan's countenance, otherwise expressive of mildness and beneficence, restrained solely by the lack of means. But when, encouraged by the affability of my reception, my heart expands itself with an emotion of pity and tenderness towards this unhappy orphan, and I proceed to warn her, with a sorrowful earnestness, against the character and designs of a man—my countryman—who, I understand, pursues her with his addresses, which are not altogether unacceptable,—then her eyes flash fire, her whole physiognomy lights up with indignation, and she assures me, with expressions of a contempt and repudiation impossible to be feigned, that no calumny could exceed this in total want of foundation!

“I felt, then, that I had been deceived! And, penetrated in my turn with a just aversion for so much falsehood and deception, Miss Graham,” Mademoiselle continued, without softening the realities of things in their expression, it must be allowed, “in reply to Emily's demand, I declare to her my informant! Petrified, but at the same time violently irritated, she on her part no longer observes any reticence on the subject, as regarded you, but reveals to me—so far as she herself understood it, she assured me—the real state of the affairs; the pretensions of Camille to your alliance—legitimately exploded by your father and mother, but which she had too much reason to believe you continued secretly to encourage!—Emily Maughan was too generous, too noble to hint—perhaps to apprehend—to what extent! But I know *you*—and I know him—and I know, therefore, better what to con-

clude ! In brief, Miss Maughan, as well as myself, sees in your attempt to cast the blame upon her a frightful disingenuity and audacity which excite her alarm as well as indignation. You are absent, and are likely to continue so. Her situation, even before my revelations, had for some reason or other become extremely distasteful and irksome to her. She takes her resolution at once—complains to Miladi Graham, your mother, of the scandalous imputation attempted to be fastened on her, and gives in her own dismissal in the space of one month ! Already this period has all but elapsed ; and probably, returned to England, Miss Maughan amply justifies her reputation from your insinuations, while you—you here, on these lakes—haunted by the shadow of Camille Le Tellier—offer proofs, no longer to be contested, of your real complicity and perfidy !”

After all, this was in some degree good news for Madeleine, though she did not relish the statement much as it went on. Emily might be already safely out of the way ! Most probably she had left Ireland, if she had left Sir Orange Graham’s family. She had little attraction to remain in that country, and it was most likely she would return to her native land and home.

Satisfied with this conclusion, Madeleine now endeavoured to turn aside the current of her friend’s justly-aroused feelings.

“You have done me a great good then, Olympe, and I thank you ; but you are wrong to take things in a manner so little intended by me ! I wished to spare you pain. I endeavoured to mystify you a little, I confess ; for your friendship was still very dear to me, and likely to become extremely useful, and I did not wish to forfeit it for the sake of so worthless a creature,” she said, in her soft, cajoling accents. “Yet, it is true, Camille had been long in pursuit of me—animated chiefly, no doubt, by the mercenary motives you had warned me to expect only in him. I must admit even that, perhaps, I had blamably encouraged his pretensions—I mean, flirted a little with him ; in a silly, unmeaning way, but which brought me into a great deal of trouble. Indeed, I cannot make out,

at this hour, the extreme folly and inconsequence of my conduct—for my heart was in reality all along given to another. You will hardly believe it," she continued, making a bold plunge into the credulity of her listener, "but from the moment I saw *that* Mr. Behringbright—you remember—at the French plays, I have not ceased to love and prefer him to all mankind!"

No: Mademoiselle Loriôt did not quite believe this; or, if she did, she took a queer way of showing it. She burst into a peal of really hearty, genuine, unstagey laughter, that made her essence-bottles jingle on the toilet-table. Of a truth, she laughed, and laughed again; there seemed no end of her laughter! And in spite of the gravity she endeavoured to maintain, Madeleine could not altogether resist the contagion. Indeed, after a vain struggle and pause, she laughed too. Perhaps there was policy in the ebullition.

"Very well, Olympe," she resumed, when at last the Frenchwoman paused in sheer exhaustion; "have it your own way: believe or not, as you please, in the sincerity of the feelings I avow. But of this you may be certain,—your lessons have not been quite cast on the winds. I *have* secured this rich prize,—the wealthy Behringbright, at last—and have the means—or shortly shall have—in my power to reward my faithful friends; above all, to exhibit my affection for the beloved guide and friend of my youth, in a substantial form, if only I can avoid one great danger!"

Olympe listened now with gravity. She laughed no longer; she was all attention.

"You do not mean to say so?" she exclaimed. "So much good fortune and happiness cannot be in store for the unhappy Olympe, in the extreme and almost hopeless misery she is sunk to!"

Madeleine reiterated her assurance in a tangible manner; she displayed the costly diamonds on her finger.

"Look at the ring he has presented me on our betrothal!" she exclaimed, flourishing the glittering stones.

Olympe was somewhat of a connoisseur in jewels. She snatched up the fair hand, and carefully examined these.

"*Mon Dieu !*" she exclaimed, letting it fall with an exclamation of delight, after turning the facets in all lights. "No, I do not dream! And it is to me that this dear child hastens with the fortunate intelligence! Embrace me indeed, my beloved Madeleine! Forgive me if for a moment I doubted your tenderness. You marry the rich Behringbright, and you repudiate the perfidious Camille!—in his turn to taste all the misery, the despair, the undying vulture at the heart, of rejection! Come to my arms."

Madeleine could perhaps have dispensed with this ceremony of reconciliation. But it was necessary to submit to it—even to seem to return it with warmth and enthusiasm.

"Well; and this dear Behringbright, where is he, since Camille is here?" Olympe inquired, at last releasing her restored pupil and friend from an embrace which all the sweet essences on her toilette would not, perhaps, have rendered so fragrant as might have been desirable.

"He is at *Glengariff Castle*, on the other side of the lake," said Madeleine, with designed emphasis.

"Ah! *Glengariff Castle*—where I am bound to go—where my dear friend shall now be my convoy—to thank the angel young nobleman who saved my life in Belfast, and, if possible, to interest him yet more in my misfortunes!" Olympe replied, with a new enthusiasm.

But Madeleine was forced to dissipate this hopeful project. She was not ill-pleased, indeed, to have Olympe placed in a complete dependence on herself. So she explained to Mademoiselle that the young nobleman could see no one—that he was declared to be almost in a dying state, in consequence of a severe accident he had sustained on the previous day, on the water.

"And moreover, Olympe," she added, with a smile, "I warn you that all these coquettish preparations would be likely to prove in vain; for you really have the most formidable of rivals with his lordship in *Emily Maughan*! It was for her sake, I assure you, he conducted himself so strangely in Belfast; but he is as good as dead now, and there is no occasion to talk any more about him."

Perhaps Mademoiselle Loriôt—warned by former experience—would not have believed much in what she heard. But she had already learned from people's talk that a terrible accident had taken place to some person of distinction on the previous day, and she admitted herself dolefully to be so unfortunate; nothing could be likelier than that it had happened to the person whom she looked upon as her last friend and patron in the world!

"And I have scarcely enough money left to convey me starving to the backdoor of some theatre!" she sighed, "where I must possibly content myself henceforth with the lowliest position—or accept a dangerous exaltation to the *tight-rope*, which has been continually urged upon me by my managers, in spite of my conviction of the misfortunes that pursue me, and a sort of giddiness I have often experienced even in my evolutions on the solid ground."

"But you shall never know the want of money again, Olympe, if you will aid me to secure my own good fortune," said Madeleine.

"What is wanting to it my child, since this wealthy *blind man* has proposed to you?" Olympe replied, with now sufficient eagerness and interest.

"I have hinted to you there is still some danger of failure in the project; in fact, it is of no use attempting to conceal the facts from you. I must confide in you absolutely, even at some risk of provoking your displeasure, if you still retain a regard for the wicked coxcomb who has been the plague, I may say, of both our lives, dearest Olympe," replied the young lady.

"You speak of Camille?" said Mademoiselle Loriôt, with a deeply sentimental sigh.

"Exactly so. And now, to avow to you the whole truth," Madeleine resumed, with no feigned reluctance. "As I told you—as Emily told you—partly in fun and partly in folly—I amused myself, in short, to some reprehensible degree with the affected passion of your perfidious lover. I even answered some of his letters—a good many, I am afraid—and I dare say very much in the foolish style of those celebrated old yellow-backed novels of ours. And so now Camille has followed me here with a who's

budget of such rubbish, and threatens me to produce them, and spoil all my chances of one of the greatest matches in the world, unless I give up Mr. Behringbright, and marry poverty, in his person."

"Marry him!—marry Camille! But have you in reality inspired such a passion into that base soul that he desires to marry a woman for her *beauty* only?" exclaimed Olympe, with a bitter malignancy of feeling that did not add by its expression to the charm of her own visage.

Nevertheless, Madeleine thought it not amiss to encourage this exasperating delusion.

"If it be so, by so much the greater will your pleasure be to assist me in thwarting the designs of a man who has shown himself so insensible to all the claims of justice and of an amply-retained affection," she remarked.

"Very true; nothing can be truer, my child," said Olympe, looking uglier and uglier every moment with malice. "You have, then, but to command me. Speak the word. What do you wish to be done?"

Madeleine explained, with an earnestness that left no doubt of her own convictions on the subject, that it was above all things necessary to retrieve from Camille's possession the letters she had mentioned.

"You know Mr. Behringbright's character of old, Olympe," she observed, obliged to awaken what was evidently a jarring reminiscence. "And I do not seek to deny to you that, for a man of so much prudery of ideas, and who has suffered so much from the volatility of other women, there might be a good deal that is fatally compromising for me in these letters. But deprived of them, all that Camille can allege would sound but as the ravings of disappointed cupidity. I can defy him; and Mr. Behringbright would remain indifferent to whatever he might venture to allege. In short, if you can secure these documents for me, they shall become, on my marriage, worth to you a thousand pounds; and I will exert all the influence of my new position to restore you to a society you are formed to adorn!"

Olympe jerked her head in acknowledgment of the compliment; but she seemed only half pleased.

"*Ma foi !*" she said, gloomily ; " but these letters must have in them something of an extremely disastrous nature, since you offer such a price for them ! But I comprehend, perhaps ! And you, perhaps, forget too much, Mademoiselle, that I also—I have once loved this man."

Madeleine discerned a strong touch of jealous irritation in these words, and she put in a counter-infusion of equal acidity to rectify the draught :

" You may have loved him once ; but surely not since you knew that it was he who pelted you with coarse vegetables from the Belfast stage !" she said.

" He ! Camille ! He threw the wreath of carrots at me ! Do not say so. Let me die without the conviction of that last excess of injury and contempt !" the poor woman—for really she was to be pitied now—exclaimed, in genuine accents of grief and indignation, very different from her usual flighty, theatrical expressions of emotion.

But Madeleine was not to be deprecatd. She assured her unfortunate friend that what she had stated was the simple fact ; that Mr. Behringbright, who never exaggerated or told a falsehood, had informed her that Camille was her unmanly assailant, whom he had with difficulty saved from the wrath of Lord Glengariff.

After all, Olympe was a human woman. The poor devilless burst into a frantic passion of grief and indignation over the intelligence, which proved her decidedly to have some feelings of the kind.

Madeleine Graham, on her part, had sufficient command over her sense of the ridiculous to join very sympathizingly apparently in the overflow ; and she found her own purpose well answered in the results. After a strong ebullition of this sort, Olympe, on a sudden, dried her tears and checked her sobs.

" Come," she said, " let us resume our fortitude ! Let us be calm—let us be rational ! Let us reflect only on the means of vengeance ! What is it you demand of me ? Behold me prepared to perish in the attainment of your object, since it also means vengeance on this traitor !"

Madeleine modestly declared she had every confidence in the abilities of her friend. What was wanted was sim-

ply to recover her letters from his custody. He had them in a portmanteau with him. He lodged at an obscure inn in a wood. The problem was to remove every shred of these documents from his power and possession.

"Ah! I remember *the inn*—the inn on the skirts of a forest!" Olympe exclaimed. But she remembered more. "*Ma foi!* there is a gleam of lightning for me over that inn and that forest! I see an *old woman* there who alights disguised in a thick veil, with a beautiful pair of gloves, and who speaks with the accent of an angel!—of a young angel! Madeleine, it is you!"

Madeleine perceived the vindictive flash in her friend's eye. But there was nothing for it but to reply,—

"It is true, Olympe! I was there to implore, almost on my knees, but in vain, the restoration of my letters!"

"You failed! Who, then, can succeed?"

"You can!—or rather we can succeed only in conjunction," said Madeleine. "I need an ally, in whom I can implicitly trust, and who will venture something on my behalf—and her own! I intend to invite Camille to a dinner, under pretence of settling our plans; and I will detain him a sufficient interval while some one carries off the fatal secrets in his possession!"

"But it is a robbery that is projected!"

"Do not call things by such absurd names! No; I only desire to get back certain papers of which an unjust use is about to be made. The letters are, properly speaking, *mine*, since I penned them. Do you not comprehend?"

"Yes," said Olympe, with a ghastly smile, "I do comprehend—your wishes—your *motives*, even! But the *means*?"

"I will tell you," replied Madeleine. "I had formed the whole idea in my head as I came along. The people of the house where Camille lodges are very simple, unprejudiced people. It is almost an open house—any one can run in and out that chooses. While he is absent dining with my aunt and me, what can be easier than for you to go to this inn, and present yourself there as what you ought to be in reality, Olympe—as the wife of Monsieur Le Tellier—of the foreign gentleman who has a room in the upper floor of the 'Red Herring'? You are a foreigner

also—you look a lady—of the very age and figure to be what you pretend. These simple Irish creatures will believe you. Then ask to be shown to your husband's apartment to await his return. They will comply. Once there alone with his depositories, do not trouble yourself with false keys or picklocks. Take a good stout knife with you, and cut open the back of the portmanteau; I have ascertained from an American, an acquaintance of Camille's, that it is a leather one. Remove *all* the letters you can find; and as it is now chilly weather enough for a foreigner, have a fire ready kindled in the bedroom, and fling one and all of these accursed documents into it. I shall take care that you have time for the operation."

"What skill! what rare ingenuity! I recognise no longer my pupil, but my mistress!" exclaimed Olympe, somewhat ironically, as it appeared; for she continued, "But this excellent work accomplished, who will be suspected and *punished for it*?"

"There is no punishment to be feared. I will supply you with ample means for escape, not only from Killarney, but from Ireland."

"I should easily be overtaken. Do they not send the lightning after criminals now?"

"Well, then, remain, and defy him with a noble defence, which will conciliate to you the admiration and enthusiasm of all who admire courage and resolution. What need you care? Avow to the world that there were letters compromising to *your* reputation in this man's possession, which you felt called upon to destroy. Every one will honour you to the skies for so doing; no jury will be found to convict you. You will be the heroine of a noble act of self-assertion—the theme of second editions of the public papers. Every one, I say, will admire your daring and dexterity. It is an age which disapproves nothing but failure."

The raw and hitherto pallid cheekbones of the un-toiletted Frenchwoman flushed with a brighter colour than her wonted rouge at the suggestion. Yet she hesitated. She was too well convinced of the bad faith and selfishness of her proposed principal to place too much stress on

Madeleine did mock her, in very truth—oh, most fearfully, most horribly mocked her. But you would not have dreamed so from her reply—nor did Olympe.

“No, dear Lorient, I am quite in earnest. I am indeed all but certain he loved you once—he reverts with so much indignation always to your conduct; and nobody ever hates so vehemently unless they have first loved the object. Only you must furbish up your charms a little, certainly. The hard life you have led has rather injured your good looks—your complexion especially, though that never was the best part of you. But you might easily, if you chose, have as good a one as mine.”

“As yours, beautiful child? Impossible! It is the product of your humid climate alone!” said Olympe, looking with a mixture of envy and admiration at her young friend.

“Not at all. Don’t you remember how freckled my face used to be at the Misses Sparx?” replied Madeleine.

“I do indeed remember—some slight sun-touches—like the crimson roughness of the peach! And it is true they are all disappeared at present.”

“I used means—and so may you—such a splendid cosmetic!”

“Means? Ah, what means?”

“Don’t you remember what we once read at school—about *arsenic*, you know? Well, I use it as a lotion, and you may see the result in the improvement of my complexion.”

“You do not mean that? That lecture made a great impression on my mind at the time, but the discreet application escaped me. I dreaded so powerful an agency, and mistrusted the philosophic teaching. But if you have really applied the drug without mischief—ah, lend me a sufficient infusion!” exclaimed Mademoiselle.

“I have none by me at present, in Killarney,” replied Madeleine; “but arsenic is to be sold every where—under certain conditions. You remember what Miss Rosabella said about the necessity of having two witnesses to the purchase? But if we went both together into the town, I
 de want—if we could

Miss Graham's assurances,—and so she reflected to herself that only a part of this programme ought to be followed out. It would be necessary for her own security to retain the letters intact. With these letters in her possession, she would indeed be mistress of the situation. Madeleine would be *compelled* to keep whatever she might promise. And she was the more confirmed in her convictions of the valuable nature of the property in question by Madeleine's assent to a most heavy condition she proceeded to lay on her co-operation.

"For the hazard of the situation I'm content. But I must have some pledge for the performance of your part, Madeleine, when once I have destroyed this evidence. Will you place that gorgeous ring in my possession until you redeem it at the price of a thousand pounds?" she said.

Even to this demand Madeleine, who felt she had no right to expect to be believed on her simple word, agreed.

"Mr. Behringbright will miss it from my hand, but I can readily devise some excuse; and as he values it so much, he will not grudge a thousand pounds for its restoration. Take it, Olympe," she said, drawing the splendid tauble from her finger, and placing it in the eagerly-outstretched claw of Olympe. But she said to herself at the same time, "If the old vulture plays me false, I shall know where to send the police for my ring."

The compact was now made, and Madeleine endeavoured to clench it yet more firmly on the other side.

"Ah! who knows, dear Olympe," she said, "but that this ring is the pledge of a second betrothal? For when Camille shall find his pretensions to me finally dissipated, who shall say that he will not return to his first love? You know the whole world turns upon itself—especially as you will then have a good deal of money, and every imaginable influence with the wife of the wealthy Behringbright."

Olympe's yellow-green eyes shone up again at this suggestion. "*Mon Dieu!* if I thought it possible!" she exclaimed; "if I did not think you mocked me!" And tears of sensibility—as she herself deemed them—overflowed those orbs.

that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland, without troubling itself about enforcing them. But he *had* heard that arsenic was very good in making a green dye, several cases of wall-paper poisoning having occurred within his practice. He therefore made no manner of objection to selling them half a pound, to make a strong suffusion, with copperas and verdegriſ, for a green shawl. Perhaps he might have hesitated to sell five or six grains. It was only through excess of innocent harmlessness of intent that Madeleine insisted on putting her name down with her friend's, as purchasers of the drug. *She* took it away with her, in order to apportion the proper quantities in the cosmetic lotions for that friend's complexion.

This was all very well. But it was a thing rather unlucky—though to be apprehended—that as the two friends came out of the apothecary's shop together, they almost ran against Mr. Behringbright.

He was returning from seeing Lady Glengariff off in her special train; and I should think he did not expect such a piece of good luck, for he started on encountering Madeleine; and he was a good deal more surprised, it was at once plain, at the company he found her in than at her own somewhat unexpected apparition.

It is a great thing when the mind is preoccupied by some overruling and masterful idea: all the minor shocks of fate pass unnoticed. Madeleine Graham was not at all troubled in her self-possession by the encounter. She put a bold front on things, and, with a generous devotion that did her nerves, at all events, the highest credit, introduced Mademoiselle Lorient at once to Mr. Behringbright as one of her kindest and most estimable school-instructresses of yore, whom she had accidentally met with in Killarney. Olympe also took her cue with professional dexterity, and with a deep curtsy to Mr. Behringbright intimated that she hoped also for the honour of his inestimable patronage in an enterprise she had undertaken in that charming little town—which was to give a few recitations, in imitation of Mesdames Rachel and Ristori, on her way to “the Cork” for the same purpose.

It cannot be denied Mr. Behringbright looked any

thing but a gracious patron in response to this appeal. He made rather a gruff reply than otherwise.

"I am astonished at your impudence, woman!" and he drew Madeleine's arm in his own, and marched her off, without the least ceremony of parting salute due to a lady and woman of talent. At least so Olympe thought, bitterly repeating to herself a thousand times:

"But with these letters in my possession, revenge will at some time also be at my obedience on this beast of an English!"

Mr. Behringbright explained, as he walked Madeleine away, that this Frenchwoman was a most improper person for her to encourage; that she was notoriously a person of bad character; that Madeleine must never on any account be seen with such a person again. And, conceiving that the time had now arrived, he divulged to Miss Graham sufficient particulars of his own first acquaintance with Mademoiselle Loriôt to satisfy even her innocence that she must have had very wicked designs upon herself once upon a time.

Madeleine was much astonished.

"Oh, how strangely they used to hide every thing from us at school!" she naïvely observed. "I thought Olympe was only dismissed for taking me to the play without the consent of the Misses Sparx, and that is what rendered me the more willing to make her any reparation in my power. And were you really there, at the play? I do not remember ever to have seen you; and yet—and yet, dear Behringbright, when we met on the steamer, it seemed to me as if I had been looking out for you all my life!"

A fond pressure of the arm linked in his own acknowledged the tender influence of the expression. In truth, Mr. Behringbright was more in love than ever. He proved it as they walked back to Prospect Palace.

"The goodness of your heart deceives you so much, darling," he said, "that I think I ought to have a better right than I yet possess to guide and restrain its rash impulses! And let the Glengariffs persist as they may in their absurd prejudices against you, I will give you a proof, if you will suffer me, of my own unbounded confidence in you. If you can dispense with a ridiculous and hamper-

ing parade, I will marry you as soon as I can get a license. Your parents will not disapprove of me, I know, as a son-in-law, and I have a right to presume on their consent, under the circumstances. Will you—can you—do you yield it?"

Madeleine was so delighted with this overture that she knew not well how to reply for the moment. A great crime might possibly yet be spared her—a crime fraught with doubtful and tremendous consequences.

"I do consent, dearest love!" she said with a warmth of acquiescence that ought to have gratified her lover, not knowing its motives. "When shall it be?"

"I will drive over to Tralee to-morrow for a license," he replied. "I would go this afternoon, only I should be too late; and I have even solemnly promised Lady Glengariff to deliver a letter she has given me for her son with my own hands to-night."

"She requires you, no doubt, to witness to the fact of this French gentleman's proposals for Emily," Madeleine replied; who, though sufficiently aware of the dangers of delay, could not decently press the point. "And I own I should fear some terrible collision between them, if Lord Glengariff were not chained to his bed by the injuries he has received. As it is, you may fearlessly prepare him for the final shock, which will either be his release from life or love, merely by delivering these tidings. On the other hand, your magnanimous confidence in me will be gloriously vindicated by the marriage you propose! Meanwhile, dear Behringbright, if you would give me leave, I would endeavour to settle the other disastrous affair in a quiet manner. Aunt and myself will invite Monsieur Le Tellier to our hotel; we will reason with him on the baseness and perversity of his conduct—on the little chance there is of his standing out upon terms, securing him better ones with you! In short, we will try to prevail upon him to hasten at once to Belfast, and make the only honourable reparation in his power, by marrying Miss Maughan unconditionally and at once. We should have a much better chance of influencing him than a man, and——"

"Influencing him!" replied Mr. Behringbright, indignantly. "The only means of influence *I* should ever

think of using with such a rascal would be by kicking him to the altar!"

"For goodness' sake, then, promise me never to see him again, or Emily's prospects are irretrievably ruined!" said Madeleine. "Promise me not to leave Glengariff, excepting to go to Tralee to-morrow; and meanwhile I hope to be enabled to effect all the good I suggest as possible."

"Not to see you, loveliest?"

"As you go through the town, perhaps, in the morning; but at present where are *we* going?"

"To the little jeweller's round by the chapel, to measure your finger, that I may buy you a ring in a quieter style than the one with which I plighted you mine, in Tralee!—Or stay; as that seemed to fit your dear little digit very well, I can take it as a measure."

"No," replied Madeleine, very firmly—"no; I will never part with that dear pledge while we two are destined to remain one! Besides, dear, it is a good deal too large, and I was so afraid of its dropping off that I put it by in my dressing-case when I came out." This was a little contradictory, but lovers in such cases do not notice contradictions.

Mr. Behringbright and his betrothed dined together that day, and spent the rest of it in the agreeable manner usual between two plighted lovers who have nothing else to think or do but to be happy in each other's society. But as Madeleine would not allow him—from a nice punctilio, which he respected—to remain at Prospect Palace all night, and still less would suffer him to go to the "Red Herring," he was in a manner obliged to return to Glengariff Castle to sleep; else I do believe he had altogether forgotten he had a letter to deliver to the young lord there, which was of rather particular consequence to *him* at any rate.

CHAPTER XLI.

SHADOWS BEFORE EVENTS.

ALL seemed going on very well—swimmingly, as they say—with Madeleine Graham; but somehow she did not rest

peacefully that night. She had uncomfortable dreams, extremely absurd ones, too,—reminiscences of old school readings, no doubt provoked by her recent confabulation with her ex-French instructress.

The reader has most likely forgotten how the eldest Miss Sparx reproved Emily Maughan, in the second chapter of this history, for supposing, by a too rapid process of induction, that people were *hung on hemp*. Yet this non-sensical association of ideas chased and tormented Madeleine through that whole miserable night; and her fancy, wandering in the manufactories and bleach-fields of her native Belfast, represented to her an endless fabrication of the material, and always into ropes—ropes—ropes to hang people on! Merciful Heaven! nothing but ropes to hang people on! The whole human race, it appeared in her delirious slumbers, was in a process of going to be hanged, and deservedly so: neither youth, nor beauty, nor sex to be spared!

It is really a pity that dreams have been adjudged a superstition. I should say they are often a correct mirroring of one's inner consciousness, when we are no longer attitudinizing to ourselves, and occasionally present perspectives of results to one's little doings, which may be truer to the probabilities of the case than the elaborate efforts at self-deception usually dignified by the name of reasoning.

Still the thing, it was evident to Madeleine's waking thoughts, *must be!* A decisive note arrived from Mr. Behringbright to her the first thing in the morning. It begged her pardon in a very eloquent and impassioned manner; but it informed her that, in compliance with a distractedly earnest request of Lord Glengariff, he had consented not to pursue their plan of an immediate marriage—not, in short, until the explanations concerning Emily had taken place. The unfortunate young man was evidently labouring under a monomaniacal possession; but he had threatened to rise from his bed, and prevent his friend and guest by main force from leaving the castle until he had clearly ascertained that Emily had no prior claim upon his honour! His lordship, indeed, went on so wildly

that Dr. Bucktrout himself assured Mr. Behringbright that he could not answer for the consequences if he persisted in refusing compliance,—and so, with the greatest reluctance, he had yielded.

A motive which his sweet Madeleine could best appreciate had influenced him, however, he added, as powerfully as the desperation and entreaties of the unhappy son of his dearest friend. But the difficulty must soon be removed, Mr. Behringbright stated, and no obstacle could then exist to their happiness. Meanwhile, his beloved girl must promise to write to him twice a day. To hear from her would be the only consolation for the species of captivity under which the demented young earl seemed resolved to detain him, for he would scarcely suffer him for a moment out of his sight.

Madeleine did write a very kind, tender, and modest reply to this missive, by the same messenger. You would have said she had never written to a man before in her life, much less to a lover. She was her dear Behringbright's ever true and faithful Madeleine, and she esteemed it her duty already to honour and obey him in whatever might be most to his wishes. He was quite right to comply with the poor frantic young nobleman's desires in the manner indicated. A short delay could be of little consequence, and it would, perhaps, be better to conduct things in the regular way, and have mamma's and papa's consent first. To be sure there was no need to fear a refusal; but they had a right to be consulted; it would look better. They could easily wait for a few days or weeks, &c., &c., &c.

After this, Miss Graham wrote a much more lively and fluent note to Monsieur Camille Le Tellier, at the "Red Herring" Tavern, informing him with veiled significance in every period, that Mr. Behringbright would be detained at the castle that day by his friend's illness; and as they might not soon have another opportunity, she hoped he would favour her aunt and herself by accepting an invitation to dinner, at five o'clock, at Prospect Palace. They could have a little private conversation on matters that would interest him. He was to be *sure and come*, and to

come alone, and he would find them without any visitors. He should pretend, however, to the people at the inn that he would be home early, for fear inquiries were made by any one in his absence. But Madeleine hoped they should find interesting topics of conversation, *relating to his future establishment*, to detain him for a few pleasant hours! The messenger was to wait for an answer.

Our friend Rooney—for we do not think ourselves above any of our creations of decent repute—found Monsieur Le Tellier at the place he was directed to, not perhaps in the best of tempers, for he was getting anxious at hearing from nobody, and wondering at Mr. Behringbright's not returning to hold some sort of satisfactory colloquy with him as to the amount of his expectations, and the particular form in which he would like to have them gratified. Moreover, he was at the moment undergoing the banter of his American friend, who had called upon him, after an interval of a day's total neglect, to deliver the note Miss Graham had confided to his care.

Flamingo was, in truth, taunting poor Camille—and most unmercifully—on the frigid style of the response.

"No occasion to pack it in ice, to bring it nice and fresh, though it has been a long time on the road, you'll see when you read it! Truth is, there was a little fellow in the hotel who, his mothers and sisters thought, had *delirium tremens*, and begged me to come up to help hold him down. But I did it much more sensibly—got him a lot more brandy and water, till he lay down of his own accord, quite comfortable. Only I made myself ill in keeping him company in the medicine, and slept like a top half to-day. Here, however, I am at last; and what are you going to stand in rhubarb and magnesia, for a love-letter like this?"

Camille, agreeably to his promise to Madeleine, wished to retract his former insinuations. "Ah, bah! I was only joking," he said, certainly without looking very jocular.

Flamingo Brown, however, got very fierce and bullying on the expression.

"Only a-joking, sir!" he exclaimed; "then be darned if I understand joking with a young lady's character in

that 'here way! And I take upon myself to say that, if she wishes it—or if she don't wish it—I have a good mind on my own account to give you a tarnation handsome cowhiding for your impudence! And I venture to affirm I couldn't do any thing more acceptable to the young lady, not even if I was to make her an offer of marriage, plump, myself!"

"You insult me, sir!" said Camille, blusteringly.

"Or I've not made my meaning clear!" replied the American, fiercely.

"And I would resent it, if this were the proper place or time," said Le Tellier, very mildly. "But nonsense, my dear Mr. Brown," he continued, with a forced attempt at liveliness and unconcern; "why should two old friends like you and me fall out about a silly girl, who is nothing to either of us, and never can be? Besides, I am in no spirits for an encounter, *mon cher*, at present," he continued, in a really very melancholy and downcast way. "My fighting genius stands rebuked, like that of Brutus when he saw Caesar's ghost the night before Philippi; I have not seen Caesar's ghost, it is true, but I have seen my own! You make great eyes at me, Mr. Brown, but I am not mad; though it is assuredly true I suffer under a very great depression of spirits."

"A *raising of spirits*, I'm of the opinion rather, Master Le Tellier," replied the American, attempting to express an enlightened incredulity in his poor pun. But, like most of his hard, and brazen, and materialistic countrymen, he was at heart very superstitious, and had the common leaning and hankering of the vulgar after the wonderful and strange in the discovery of relations with that unknown world, in which they scarcely, perhaps, believe at all. His curiosity was therefore excited, and for a time the notion on which he had probably started, of figuring cheaply as champion of the future Mrs. Behring-bright, changed under the new impulse.

"And so you've seen a ghost, have you? And, of all the ghosts in the world, your own! What makes you think so, you young sighaway donkey, you?" he resumed, in a more friendly manner.

"I will tell you, sir," replied Camille, with solemnity : "perhaps, with your enlightenment, you may offer me some explanation that can reconcile me to more comfortable convictions than at present possess my imagination. Your countrymen are noted for an incredulous sagacity, not easily the dupe of the illusions of the heart or fancy ; and the ancient superstitions of the world have no root in your fresh and uncultivated intellects. Let me see ; what shall I relate ? Suffice it, as a preliminary, to state that, wearied of calculations and conjectures as to the possible combinations of destiny in an approaching conjuncture, I descended last night to the coffee-room of this hotel, in the hope to find some relief for the exhaustion of my mind in the society of my fellow-man, however inferior in social position—this inn being certainly none of the very best. Witness the coffee-room itself, strewn with sawdust as if for an execution, and with small metal boxes placed all round beside every chair for the convenience of the smokers, who smoke only pipes. But, by a chance which I know not whether to call happy or not, I find in this apartment, besides a group of rustics who puff a rank tobacco and drink their *whiskey* in silence, a certain professor of a university who is here on a geological excursion. Fatigued with the pursuits of the day, he, too, is refreshing himself—resting his mind, as he told me—over a glass of an excellent mixture, which I know not whether you call it in your great country also, a toddy ?"

"Sometimes ; we know well enough, however, what it means in any country," assented Flamingo, who listened with evident attention, though at the mention of tobacco he drew a handful from his pocket, and, smiling contemptuously at the spittoons, lighted a short meerschaum, and—dispensed with their use.

"This professor was originally a Scotchman, though he had become, by long residence and citizenship in this island, an Irishman."

"Beg yor pardon there, Mr. Le Tellier ; a Scotchman never *can* become an Irishman : 'taint in the natur of the animal," interrupted Flamingo.

"Be it so; I only mention the circumstance to account for another of more importance. Necessarily perceiving in each other a degree of similar intelligence and position that entitled us to speak, the Professor and I entered into conversation to the exclusion of the rest of the company; and, in the first place, we discussed the problem of the reality or not of the imputed Irish wit. The Professor declared to me that he had never been able to discover it, and that for his part he believed the whole report a delusion, and that those who had discovered the wit of the Irish people had brought it all with them into the country. For his part, he had never had the luck to light on any of those wonderful, heavenborn Irish peasant humourists who amuse the world in jest-books. On the contrary, he maintained that the Hibernians are a people of the most melancholy and sombre genius, and he instanced the dismal belief in a species of spirit called Banshee, universal in Ireland, which is constantly engaged in shrieking warnings of death in an appalling manner in the night. The Glengariff family, he stated to me in illustration, enjoyed the deplorable privilege of one of these fearful attendants; and the recent accident, so likely to result in the extinction of an ancient race, had been announced a long time ago, in this way, to Lord Glengariff's mother.

"With a commendable nationality, the Scotch Professor then proceeded to observe that, in his opinion, the supernatural fancies prevalent among his countrymen indicated a much sublimer sense of the terrible and awful; and he called to witness the dreadful phantasm designated a *Wraith*. On my demanding an explanation of this singular term, he favoured me with the statement that a wraith is the ghost of a living being, which appears to him as a warning of approaching departure,—a ghost which is in all respects the exact projection of the figure of the unfortunate person beholding it—a shadowy repetition, a reflection, a *double*!"

"Everybody knows that. I don't see the Professor's great discovery in all this," said Flamingo Brown, with an attempt at the pooh-pooh which did not seem a suc-

cess, for it was evident he awaited what was to follow with anxiety.

"Neither did the superstition strike me at the time as worthy of the immense stress laid upon its terrors by the learned Professor Doubleday," Camille resumed. "Nevertheless, I had not heard of it before, and doubtless it made some impression on my imagination. A considerable interval had, nevertheless, elapsed; the Professor had returned to his quarters at another hotel, and I had remained musing by the coffee-house fire until every body had departed,—until the waiter, who had the tramp of a cart-horse, entered to close the shutters, and admonish me that it was near midnight. I must have wandered far from the recollection of the discussion on the Scotch apparition; I remember, indeed, I was thinking only of my old father at Marseilles, training his nasturtiums up the bars of a prison where he has long been confined for debt, and rejoicing in the tidings of my approaching good fortune, which he shall share. I am not altogether destitute of a certain natural sensibility, which the world has not been enabled to root effectually out of my heart.

"Well, then, taking a spluttering tallow candle, which was all my inn afforded, I ascended to my chamber; and now I swear to you what I am about to relate is exactly the truth, without exaggeration. The moment I entered it, I perceived, in a fog of moonlight which shines over my leather portmanteau directly placed beneath the window, A FIGURE WHICH WAS MYSELF IN EVERY PARTICULAR,—with the exception that it was ghastly pale as ashes—and that it was swallowing, with many wry faces and contortions, a cup apparently of some liquid like coffee, only it was all lit with a faint, tremulous blue flame, which shed a horrible light upon the livid, corpse-like face!"

"Yoiks! you don't say so! I shouldn't have licked my lips to see *that*, by no means, as I'm a living sinner!" said the American, looking considerably aghast himself. "But I know how it was. You had swallowed too much of that same whiskey toddy, and thought you saw yourself going it still—on the leather box."

"Not so. I am extremely abstemious in every respect

but coffee. I had only taken a single small glass," replied Camille, very sadly and seriously, "for which I paid *threepence*."

"Then I'll tell you another way how it was. You saw yourself in a looking-glass right a-head, and didn't calkellate at the time what it was," consoled Flamingo, who really himself did not relish the dismal fancy.

"But there is only a very small mirror in the apartment, which is placed in the opposite direction. I was *upright*, with a candle in my hand, and this figure was *seated*, with a *cup* of some beverage—not a *glass*."

"Wal, then, most likely the window-panes had been recently polished, and reflected as good as a looking-glass. Anyhow—nohow—I'll never believe such stuff!" said Flamingo, resolutely. "Still I don't wonder at its having taken you down a peg or two, for it might a man of courage and grip; and I'll not press my point about that thar gal, for fear you should raly pluck up and show fight, when I should be bound to swallow you in self-defence, and the ghost come trew!"

The American laughed at his own drollery in this observation, and as Camille also gave a faint giggle, harmony seemed restored. It was at this moment that Rooney arrived with Madeleine's note of invitation.

It was easy to see how the young man—after ceremoniously asking leave of Mr. Brown to peruse it—brightened up over the contents. Yielding, in fact, to one of his imprudent impulses, Camille handed it over at once, triumphantly, to the American sceptic.

"Ah! ah! Does this look as if I am scarcely the commonest acquaintance with this young lady?" he inquired.

"No; it looks a deal stronger than that, I own. There's a sort of double meaning running throughout it that rather supports your brags, Le Tellier," Flamingo pronounced, after a careful study of the document submitted to him. "But 'taint the same handwriting as she wrote you in by me! How's that? Tell you what, there's some queer mystery about this whole gal and affair, or my father was a buffalo!"

"Ah, my folly again! I am always in the wrong. Give it me back!" exclaimed Camille, snatching the note from the eager scrutiny of his compeer.

"Have it, and welcome! But if this note was quilled by Miss Graham, this other wasn't, and I claim it as my treasure-trove!" returned the American, in his turn snatching up the note he had brought, and which Monsieur Le Tellier had flung down on the table in the room where their colloquy took place. And as he pocketed it, and looked very fierce, and as if he meant to keep it, Camille pretended to laugh assentingly, and called for pen and ink to write his acceptance of the invitation he had received.

When he had nearly completed this task, however, the American, who had been looking on with an appearance of profound reflection, remarked—

"Tell you what, though; I wouldn't go to the invite if I was you! She's a rale out-and-outer, you may depend, where she takes it, though not the partic'lar sort for exportation. There's a devilish corner of mischief in her eye—and hasn't she asked you to dinner? So just you remember that ar WRAITH, and stop at home, and dine at your own expense!"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Camille, with evident excitement. "*She* harm me! Madeleine Graham harm *me*! For what purpose? How could she dare? What would be the use? No," he added, but rather to himself than to his companion, "she knows too well so odious an act would also be in vain. The papers would remain, and more certain to be produced to the light in the hands of strangers! She is no fool; it would be a madness! Oh! and if she could be atrocious enough to harbour evil designs against me," the unfortunate wretch concluded, melting into an effusion of natural though womanish tears, "I no longer care for my life! Let her take it!"

"The papers?—what papers? Oh, the letters," said Flamingo, catching at the word. "Wal, they are a good security, if she knew them in proper hands. Leave them in my charge."

"And offend her mortally!" ejaculated Camille, remembering his scolding on the previous day. "Certainly not; some secrets are like gold leaf—to breathe on them is to destroy their lustre and cohesion. I shall leave the key of my apartment with the hostess, who can depend also on the assistance of the apparition. For in my alarm last night I raised an outcry which summoned her to my chamber, and has diffused a salutary awe ever since in the household, since the maid has refused to make my bed unless I remain to protect her all the while!"

"As you will, Frenchy; I only interfered for your benefit, as I have all along," returned Flamingo, very discontentedly, but seemingly oblivious that so short a time previously he had been threatening the young man himself. "However, chalk it up that I meant well, and stand tit for tat. When you see miss, remind her that she has promised to make things pleasant between me and old Behringbright, and that I shall turn saucy if she does not do it!—and soon too. I want to be off from this confounded place, where it's always raining such a down-pour, one's wet through the skin five times a-day."

"And so do I," said Camille; "and I promise you if I find I have any influence on my own behalf, I will exert some, dear friend, on yours. But it is doubtless this moist climate which produces upon both of us so profound a sentiment of discouragement," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

"I don't know that I'm much discouraged, either; *my* nerves don't go up and down with my umbrella. What do they charge you here for dinner? and what do they give you for the money?" inquired the American, voraciously.

Camille delivered a tariff of prices, founded on his own somewhat limited experience, in answer to this demand.

"Wal, then, I'll make out my day here. I'll warrant I eat them a rare half-crown's-worth meal. But she might have joined me in the invite; she seemed taken with me quite remarkable last night at Prospect Palace. Still I shall do well enough any where. I've been on my own hook long enough to take care and hang myself up

on a nail that'll bear the weight. Give Miss G. my compliments, and do your best for me, or I must for myself, tell her ! And harkee ! we'll see this ghost of yours together to-night when you come home, if one's to be seen at all."

Camille smiled, yet rather sadly and absently, as a doomed man well might ; completed his note, handed it out to Rooney, with a much-begrudged shilling, called for a can of hot water, and withdrew to his toilette, full two good hours before the expected time for its display could arrive.

CHAPTER XLII.

A MODERN DINNER A LA BORGIA.

FLAMINGO, lounging in a state of torpor over the vast gorge he had taken in for his half-crown, but which he made up to the house by a still more plentiful proportion of liquids, watched Camille taking his departure, a long time after, with some amusement in the contemplation of his costume. The Rue de Rivoli would have been proud of Monsieur Le Tellier undoubtedly ; he was finished at all points like a carving in ivory, and might have stepped unchallenged into the dress-circle of the most stuck-up opera-house in Europe ; which, as we have the best of every thing, is of course our own. His handkerchief exhaled a delicate odour ; he wore several rings and a handsome chain, which, if they were not of the precious materials they affected, were so artistically fashioned to represent them that it mattered little to any body but a pawnbroker what else they were. Nothing could exceed the elegant finish of his whiskers and hair, and they curled and were very bright with *cosmétique blanc*. Possibly he was even rouged, he had so fine a colour ; and his waist was as the waist of a youthful wasp, though I do not assert that the elder members of that order of insect aristocracy develop very aldermanically in advanced existence.

" There you go, as smart as a primrose !" said the

American, with a sleepily-good-natured nod to the young Frenchman, by way of salute, as he passed. Boa-constrictors themselves, it is possible, are good-natured after a high feed at a low figure. But he noticed every thing from under his shaggy eyelashes,—the pale lavender kid gloves and all.

“Tarnation fine gal!” he commented, as Camille disappeared. “But rather him than me, under the circumstances; especial-ly after that thar remarkable concatenation of the ghost on the portmant-ó!”

But as for Camille, his good opinion of himself, and livelier spirits, had evidently returned at the toilette glass. He smiled so agreeably, and looked as if even a repetition of his uncomfortable vision of the night before would not have annoyed him so very much if the wraith took care to present itself with an exact repetition also of the elegance of his costume. And no doubt the ruling principle of his mind—personal vanity—was again in the ascendant, and he believed very consolingly in his own resistibility,—was determined, in fact, to put it to the proof.

The idea was encouraged by all he encountered at Prospect Palace.

He found Madeleine dressed in a feminine adaptation of his own style; gay, coquettish, apparently delighted to receive him—and alone; a circumstance she prettily explained by informing her dear Camille that she had invited him purposely an hour sooner than the real dinner-hour, in order that they might enjoy a little private conversation, and discuss and arrange their future, while her aunt was out at a charitable meeting in the town, without interruption from other people’s advice and ignorance.

In reality, Madeleine was more at ease in her mind than she had been for some time. She had fairly made it up; was no longer tossed and tumbled on those soul-sickening waves of doubt and irresolution: she knew now precisely what she must do, and was going to do it. Moreover, she had just received a very comforting and strengthening note from Mr. Behringbright, couched in the most affectionate terms, and expressive still of unbounded confidence and devotion. And yet, he stated, he

had communicated the last astounding revelation regarding Emily Maughan to Lord Glengariff, with his mother's confirmatory letter,—and was delighted to say that, after a long pause of astonishment, the invalid had seemed to rally in a very extraordinary manner on the intelligence; declared that it explained every thing; set at rest all his suspicions of his best friend; relieved him at once and for ever of the delusion of passion he had cherished for so mistaken an ideal of female purity and goodness; which was, in reality, the worst part of his disorder. And he would have proved the assertion, insisting that he was perfectly able to get up, and would at once—if Dr. Bucktrout had not interfered, and by earnest exhortation prevailed on him to remain in his bed.

But Mr. Behringbright declared his own conviction that the news had produced a most excellent effect towards the restoration of the young earl from the feverish and half-delirious condition to which, it was now probable, anxiety of mind, as much as the suffering caused by his wound, had reduced him. He had spoken on the subject with so much determination and calmness; was so resigned to consider that his mother's journey must and ought to prove entirely bootless; and, finally, at the very hour Mr. Behringbright was writing, had fallen into the first sound, natural slumber he had enjoyed since the accident, and from which Dr. Bucktrout augured the best results if it could be preserved for some continuance unbroken. And so much importance did the physician attach to the operation of this simple restorative of nature that he directed every one else to retire for the night, and remained himself in watchful attendance on the patient.

This intelligence was reassuring for Madeleine, who was in great dread of the possible impetuous and destructively direct interference of the young earl in her devices. She knew they would not bear much straining in any way; and though she had calculated on his remaining disabled by his illness, probably for ever, in the result, still it was good to know that he took the appalling communication in so very sensible and acquiescent a manner. He might have done a great deal of mischief else before

he died,—like a fallen war-horse that strikes right and left with his hoofs, in the convulsions of death.

Still, if she had not known she had a grand panacea in store for Camille's worst follies and caprices, Madeleine would not have liked the use her *ci-devant* beloved put his opinion to,—that he was fully restored to favour with his lady-love,—in the first effusions of their resumed confidence and tenderness.

Camille was, of course, entirely ignorant of the part assigned him in all these tranquillising and illuminating revelations. But he had come to the conviction that he had allowed himself to be compromised dangerously and foolishly, even in figuring in the affair so far as he himself was aware he did figure. He did not like it, he said, being made to pretend that he was courting another woman than her whom in reality he adored. He must have the whole thing decided upon speedily: the whole nonsensical subterfuge might be discovered at any moment, and then how ridiculous—*Ciel!* how *ridiculous!*—he would be made to appear. Indeed, *frivolulent*: he seemed to be trying to advance himself in Behringbright Brothers' favour under false pretences! That would never do—when it was found out. The merchant might even punish him at law: but he would be too much afraid, himself, of ridicule to go back, if once he could be fairly committed to the proper course. And the proper course was for Mr. Behringbright to admit him—Monsieur Camille Le Tellier—into a junior partnership in his house, which his talents and industry would help to sustain (Behringbright himself was clearly not *so young as he had been*, in any thing!), with a share in the profits in the first place, to the extent of about two thousand a-year.

Camille declared that he must be gazetted at once into this position, as a preliminary, in order that he might make sure his dearest Madeleine did not mean to play him any unhandsome trick.

His dearest Madeleine herself seemed not to consider this demand at all out of the way—at all extortionate—at all impossible.

“It is very likely he will do it—all as you require,

dear Camille," she remarked, "if only you will give me a little more time. I will try him *to-morrow*. It is *very* likely, he seems so anxious to get Emily quartered on some one! Indeed, I sometimes almost wonder whether there is not some foundation for Lord Glengariff's suspicions of him with her! He was tired of Emily, I suppose, or afraid things would come out, when he shipped her off to Ireland from her poor widowed mother. And, of course, he would do any thing to hinder me from finding out how wickedly he has behaved in the transaction."

"*Mon Dieu!* And does he dare to think that his—his cast-off mistress—is a proper wife for Camille Le Tellier? I am obliged to you, Madeleine; you justify all my indignation, and the weapons I employ against them are no longer those of falsehood and treachery, but of a legitimate vengeance!"

"That is what I think; but let us not discuss the point. I assure you, meanwhile, that I will comply as early as possible with the demands of your impatience. *To-morrow*, I repeat! I shall not see Mr. Behringbright, to urge the subject upon him, till then; but it is plain he is completely devoid of suspicion of you with regard to me, which is the greatest point—since he himself desired me to invite you to dinner, in his absence, and ascertain precisely what you required as the conditions of your acquiescing in his scheme of providing for Emily. You have stated them to me now, and it's enough."

"No more confirmation is needed for a conjecture which so dishonours me, since you say Behringbright authorises my visit here!" Camille responded, looking tremendously indignant, but secretly flattered with the conviction of the great and commanding position he occupied in the affairs of the millionaire. It seemed to him, poor deluded creature, that he was already fingering his two thousand a-year as junior partner in the firm of Behringbright Brothers, and completing the confusion and defeat of his purseproud, domineering rival, by eloping with his bride-elect! They might try to buy him out of the firm, then, it is true; but they could not manage to get rid of him otherwise.

Madeleine need not have been much afraid of the process, but she did not like to see Monsieur Tellier think. Yet she started herself from a meditation, when she remarked it, which had only lasted a few seconds—but had dived into so deep an abyss of criminal resolve that she apologised for being so long silent, when she spoke, imagining a much greater interval had elapsed. And thereupon she fell to rallying her lover playfully on the strange manner they were spending their time together; and Camille, piqued on his gallantry, set to work to produce his choicest artificial flowers of love-making; such as French Corydons have handed down to one another to wreath their crooks withal, with very little change or variety, from the earliest age of classicism—“*Comme Vénus belle—comme Minerve elle est sage!*” being the tune to which all their chimes are set.

The dinner was even considerably later than Madeleine had announced, and yet Mrs. Bucktrout did not seem to be aware she had at all exceeded the time assigned when they sat down to the repast at seven instead of five. Time was to be got over, somehow or other. The dinner was a very good one, and consisted of several courses; so that assisted admirably. Then there was the dessert, which, with a flow of excellent wine and conversation, could be protracted almost to any extent.

Moreover, Madeleine exerted herself amazingly to keep up the ball. Camille had hardly ever before seen her so light, so brilliant, so playful—so much like a *Parisienne*, in short—in her demeanour towards him. They generally prated romance at each other in their interviews, and neither of them had a particle of the real stuff in them. He was in proportion charmed and fascinated; pleased and proud also to think that she was applying all these newly-discovered powers to his satisfaction and enthrallment. For there had been many heavy moments of late, when all Camille's vanity could not assure him that he still remained supreme with the wealthy merchant's daughter.

Not but what there were some few intervals during which all Madeleine's efforts to command her attention could not hinder her from sinking into pauses of forgetful-

ness and absence of mind so complete that, I believe, on more than one occasion she looked at Camille fixedly for several minutes without seeing him at all. But that invaluable development of his organ of self-esteem persuaded him she was taking an admiring survey of his person and embellishments; and the strange vacancy in such intentness of consideration did not strike him alarmingly. On his own part, he had all a Frenchman's love of chatter, and he was particularly anxious to produce a magnificent impression, in this first friendly and sociable intercourse with which he had ever been favoured with a member of the family-circle of his beloved. As for Mrs. Bucktrout, she listened much as a frog in a well might to the chirruping of the birds in the woods above it. But if she did not make, she did not mar, satisfied that so consummate a genius for management as her niece must be conducting all this airy and unmeaning palaver to some very suitable and tangible result.

At last Madeleine said to herself, "It is ten o'clock; it will take him half an hour to walk home; by eleven Olympe will have succeeded, or never, and the tea will give her an additional three-quarters. Shall we have tea now, aunt?" she concluded aloud.

"Yes, my dear, if you wish. Mr. Le Tellier has not done any thing at the fruit or decanters for a long time."

"I will ring, then, aunt." But Camille had already leaped to the bell with polite velocity, and jingled it. Rooney, the waiter, responded.

"Tea and coffee, please. Monsieur Le Tellier prefers coffee; and so, I think, do I, aunt, this afternoon," said Miss Graham quite calmly.

The messenger of destiny disappeared to the kitchen.

"You, my dear? Why, you know how bilious coffee always makes you, Madeleine."

"Sometimes—yes; so it does. But you *do* prefer coffee, Camille?" the latter said, with a sweet smile at her French lover, and a fascinating forgetfulness of the presence in which they were, implied in the use of that familiar form of address.

I think the strongest argument against the likelihood

of supernatural interpositions lies in their almost invariable uselessness. How came it that Camille never for a moment reminded himself of that vision of the wraith, with a cup of some loathsome beverage at its lips, and of a remarkable allusion made in a recent interview to his partiality to coffee? He did not; he certainly was very fond of coffee.

Tea and coffee and biscuits were brought; there was plenty of lump sugar in a silver basin on the tray; that was good for *tea*. But Madeleine, very well knowing that powdered sugar was the proper thing for coffee, got up, when the waiter left the room, and brought out a handsome Bohemian cut-glass basin from a small gilt sideboard cupboard, where the occupants of the private sitting-chamber could lock up any little stores they did not desire to return to common property at the bar below.

"Aunt and I are very fond of sugar," she remarked, smilingly; "you should see how we sometimes cover the puddings they send us up, till the plate looks as if there had been a snowstorm on it. We are quite obliged to buy in extra stores for mere shame's sake."

Mrs. Bucktrout looked surprised, but made no observation. When a great leader once acquires a reputation for generalship, it is scarcely possible for him to choose a battle or bivouac-ground amiss, in the opinion of his soldiery. Madeleine, indeed, grew a little pale herself as she said this, but for the briefest possible moment of weakness.

"And I shall have coffee too, aunt, this evening; it will not harm me for once—for the sake of the sweetening, chiefly," she said, with an affectionate smile at Camille, who took it as a complimentary sharing of his own tastes, and smiled and bowed.

"Do you prefer powdered or loaf sugar, Mr. Le Tellier?" inquired Madeleine, after helping her aunt to some tea. She knew very well what he would say.

"Powdered, if you please, Miss Graham."

And powdered sugar he had, a good allowance of it; and very finely pounded and smooth and white the sugar was. In spite of her avowed preference for the same, however, Madeleine helped herself to lump sugar, though

she made no ostentatious display of the substitution ; on the contrary, helped herself when Monsieur Le Tellier's attention was accidentally called off by her remarking on the beautiful effect of the rising moon on the waters of the lake below their windows. She said it was quite like a scene in a theatre, and that interested the French observer of nature.

The coffee was very nice ; it was delicious. Miss Graham had especially urged upon the hotel people the necessity of having some very nice coffee made ready for the foreign gentleman who was to dine with them that day. Monsieur Le Tellier had two cups, and would probably have taken a third if Miss Graham had not looked at her watch at the moment. She then gave a significant glance at her lover. Camille understood it, and complied with the silent admonition conveyed—and the rather that he did not feel so very well after that last cup ; and knowing what an unwonted variety of food he had partaken of, and that his digestion was rather of the weakest, he arose to take his leave.

He would have been glad, perhaps, if Madeleine could have afforded him the pleasure of a few parting private words, but she either could not, or did not think it expedient to attempt. She shook hands with him in her aunt's presence ; but she emphatically, almost convulsively, returned the slight lover's pressure he ventured to bestow on hers, and responded in a very sweet tone, and decidedly as if she meant it,

"Bonne nuit, cher Camille : au revoir demain."

It was quite right and fitting that Madeleine should make that last affectionate farewell and promise of soon meeting again in French. French is not exactly the language of sincerity ; and people not born in France who mean what they say had better say it in their mother tongues.

Camille gave one of his thrilling parting looks at Miss Graham—one of those looks which he always fancied to be irresistible. She did not meet his tender gaze ; but he saw that, with the exception of two burning blotches on her cheeks, Miss Graham was so deadly pale that he had

every reason to think that she was much afflicted at the necessity of parting from him. He blamed the aunt for whatever besides seemed cold in the farewell, and, persuaded that his walk home to his quarters would do him good, finally took his departure—very well satisfied, on the whole, with his visit.

Madeleine seemed as if relieved from the spell of some dreadful supernatural presence when the guest retired. She gave such a sigh of exhaustion and weariness as the door closed, that her aunt herself, who was wearied to death of the affair, was a little scandalised at it.

"He is, however, dreadfully tedious with his chatter, chatter, chatter. I am so glad, dear, that you have given up altogether thinking about such a fellow. But did you make all the arrangements right about him and Emily?" Mrs. Bucktrout inquired.

"Yes, aunt,—quite right."

"Then hadn't you better go to bed, dear? I am sure you look fagged out," said the kind relative.

"No, aunt, no; I don't feel sleepy. I feel quite cold and feverish," replied the niece; and, indeed, she shuddered violently. "Still I think I'll put things by (that's our sugar, you know; I bought it for our own use, it looked so nice in the grocer's window in Killarney, and the hotel stuff, I am sure, has had black-beetles in it), and then, yes, we'll go to bed. I'll sleep with you to-night. I was frightened last night at sleeping alone, the wind made such a horrid sighing and moaning about the house; it did indeed sound like the screeching of the banshee they talk so much of here."

The young lady arose and removed the basin of pounded sugar, as if to consign it to the private lock-up; but, with most unusual awkwardness for her, let it fall on the fender, where it broke into pieces.

"Dear me! but it's no use now. Lend me the fire-shovel, aunt, and I'll put it all on the fire."

"Why, my dear?" said Mrs. Bucktrout, who was a person of very saving and also very charitable habits. "It will do yet, properly sifted—at least for servants or the poor."

"It sha'n't. For shame of you, aunt! I would not offer it to a pig," said Madeleine, seizing the instrument she required, with almost rude violence, past her aunt, and shovelling the fragments of the basin and its contents alike on the fire, which, equally against Mrs. Bucktrout's economical notions, she had caused to be kindled for the reception of their foreign visitor, native of a sunnier clime.

Madeleine continued strangely peevish and contrary for a good long time afterwards; but still complaining of being cold, would not leave the fire and go to bed until her aunt remarked that the people in the hotel would begin to think it queer. She started up at once then, and professed her willingness to retire, but not, as she had previously wished, to share her relative's couch. She felt, she said, that she should be so restless and uncomfortable, her aunt would not have a moment's sleep. Her aunt was quite right—that coffee had disagreed with her, and would make her feverish all night. Oh that it was morning; that next day, in fact, was over! But when Mrs. Bucktrout asked her why, she only laughed, and said, "It was nothing; she was only talking nonsense—only wishing that the time was come for Lady Glengariff to send word how she sped on her mad journey." Then, snatching up a bed-candle, she hurriedly bade her aunt good-night, and left the apartment for her own—so abruptly that Mrs. Bucktrout was cut half short in a solemn nocturnal benediction she usually bestowed upon her niece, ever since it was certain she was to enter on the duties and responsibilities of the married life with a millionaire.

Neither will I undertake to say that Madeleine felt much more composed and soothed when she reached the privacy of her own chamber. The reflections which accompanied her there were not altogether of the pleasantest.

She had discharged her duty to SOCIETY now, indeed; she had followed the maxims of an enlightened self-interest to their uttermost consequences; she had preferred MONEY TO EVERY THING!—to all the pleasing memories of a first passionate though guilty attachment—to the yearning sentiment of preference never extinguished in a woman's heart towards that first object of its mightiest im-

pulse—to every sentiment, indeed, of pity, mercy, hospitality; had ventured all—life itself; had incurred the most dreadful penalties of the laws alike of God and man, in homage to the golden Moloch in whose worship she had been reared. And yet Madeleine Graham was not content with herself—could not rest comfortably, even on the conviction that she had provided against every possible danger of a discovery.

Who would concern themselves about the fate of an obscure stranger, at a miserable little inn, surrounded by ignorant people, if he was assailed on the sudden by a disorder to which Camille Le Tellier knew himself to be subject, and died of it?

If Olympe had employed her time as dexterously and resolutely as was to be expected from her cleverness, her excited hopes of recompense, her hatred of the victim, not a trace would remain to point to any one as having any possible motive or interest to do harm to this obscure stranger—much less to destroy him.

All would be well—must be well—should be well! Madeleine would be able soon, without fear or hesitation, to accept the splendid destiny in reserve for her! But was it so splendid a destiny, after all? A million of money, it is true! But—to be shared with Mr. Behringbright!

And asking herself this question, Madeleine Graham—amazing contradiction in what was still a human nature! miraculous proof of the supremacy of the fiend worshipped by our age!—knew and felt that she had consigned to a death of enormous suffering a man she loved, in order that she might marry a man she disliked, for his riches!

It was too late now to repent—too late! But a horrible grief and terror, on a sudden, invaded her heart; and Madeleine almost shrieked aloud as she cast herself on her couch, exclaiming, “And I have committed a murder, and am in danger of the gallows, to make myself miserable for life!”

Still, however, it was of self chiefly, we see, that she thought, and all the rest was a matter of mere instinctive emotion; for any moral sense at work in the matter, Madeleine Graham might as well have been a serpent that

had bitten a man's heel, and lay coiled again in the jungle, in dread of his revengeful trample.

It must have been so ; for the only consolatory thought that occurred to her was the magnificence of the *trousseau* with which she should be enabled to astonish all Belfast, when she was married to the millionaire !

CHAPTER XLIII.

RIVALRY UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

MEANWHILE Camille, proceeding on his solitary walk to his inn, did not find that it did him all the good he expected. He felt a curious qualminess and heartburning.

Something, no doubt, had disagreed with him at his dinner. Things often did. Or was it the dinner altogether ? He was not accustomed to such sumptuous feeding, certainly ; yet it was all so nice. Could it be the broccoli-sprouts ? No ; they were very good, thoroughly cooked, yet of a fine lively green ; were only unhealthy when boiled frosty, and then they always looked yellow. The salmon cutlets ? Oh, no ; nothing could be fresher than the fish was. That delicious coffee, besides, ought to have settled every thing. No ; it must be one of his old bilious attacks, possibly to be debited to that fiery hot "whiskey" he took the night before. What nonsense to think so ! A little "whiskey" might do him good : he had best make home sharp to his inn, and try.

Moreover, the recollection of the stories he had heard about wraiths and banshees—of the dreadful proof he fancied himself to have received of the existence of the former ghastly phantoms—naturally hurried the Frenchman's steps in traversing his lonely road. The exceeding brightness of the moonlight comforted him but little. He knew he had to pass along the skirts of a dark wood to reach his quarters at the "Red Herring." The illumination of the open road would only throw those leafy recesses into deeper shadow. It was certainly getting on to midnight

also. He had stopped strangely late, Camille acknowledged to himself, at a dinner with two ladies. But then the lovely Madeleine seemed to wish it, and had never before exhibited herself more truly charming and irresistible—had never before appeared more completely under his own charm and influence.

This idea soothed Camille, and almost made him forget he had a pain in his stomach that was growing singularly in uneasiness and sharpness. He tried to forget it, and to assure himself he was not in the least alarmed, by humming an opera-air as he proceeded. The midnight birds, awakened in Kenmare Woods by the sound, turned their heads from side to side in wonderment, not understanding Italian much more than most other insular audiences, to hear the warbling demand,—

*"Crudel, perché finora
Farmi languir così?"*

But other creatures than birds seemed to have their attention excited by the melody—another creature at all events. Turning the corner of the road from the wood, which led by a bypath to the little tributary streamlet on which the "Red Herring" stood, Camille became suddenly aware that a tall figure of a man wrapped in a long cloak, and with a hat slouched down to his eyes, stood directly in the midst of the way along which he must pass.

The immovability of this figure, its unusual height, the blackness of its vesture, cast into strong relief in the brightness of the moonlight, struck a not unreasonable alarm into Camille. But prepossessed with superstitious terrors as his imagination was, he could not for more than a moment alarm himself with the notion that he was coming upon his own phantom again. The figure was so much taller than himself—its dark and massive style of costume so little like a Frenchman's. What could it be, then?

It was possible—likely enough—that it might be his long, gaunt American friend, Flamingo Brown, come out to spy for his return. On that supposition, Camille hastened his steps again, and as the figure did not move at all, rapidly gained upon it.

"He is standing in that motionless way on purpose to frighten me. He will be surprised to see how coolly I take it, and I shall rehabilitate myself in his esteem as a person of courage!" thought poor Monsieur Le Tellier, resuming his warbling, and striving to forget an increase of internal suffering in the occupation of his mind. He could scarcely help, however, shrieking aloud when, approaching almost close to the figure, in this *nonchalant* style, it raised its head, and he perceived a countenance which he had only seen once before, but had never forgotten. To be sure it was on a kind of occasion men do not easily forget; and this recognition, in conjunction with the paleness of the countenance and phosphorlike glow of the eyes, induced Camille to exclaim, in horror, "*Mon Dieu!* what do I behold? It is the Earl of Glengariff's WRAITH! Holy Mary! for what reason does it present itself, then, before me?—Speak, terrific portent! What does your presence mean?"

And Le Tellier betook himself to a wild rhapsody of prayers to divinities he had possibly not had recourse to since he left his mother's knee.

A very human utterance, however—hoarse with passion, and yet quite as plainly vibrating with contempt—interrupted him.

"Peace, foolish wretch!" it exclaimed; rather uncivilly perhaps. "I am no spectre—I am the man whose likeness you discern. And I have been waiting hours for you here, if you are the person whom I take you to be—a Frenchman, Camille Le Tellier by name."

"My name is Camille Le Tellier, sir, and I am a Frenchman," returned the party described, recovering from one alarm only to plunge into another. "But what is the reason, *milord*, that you address me in these accents of scorn and rebuke? I could not demand of you satisfaction for your insult to me in Belfast, for I understood you were all but dying in your bed in a sumptuous castle, which has the honour to call you master! For what reason can she have told me this falsehood also?" he concluded, in astonishment, as to himself.

"I have heard news that would have roused me from my grave, villain!" returned the stern hero of the Belfast

theatrical row—continuing, in the same uncompromising style: “I was surrounded by an atmosphere of falsehood and perjuries on my sick-couch, which I am determined to pierce, and to trust to my own eyes only. Tell me, then, is it true you are here in Killarney to ask the hand of Emily Maughan in marriage of her guardian?—that you *have* asked it, and that he has accepted you as her husband?”

Camille Le Tellier had been informed by Madeleine—in hopes to stimulate him to rivalry against the young nobleman, who had also treated him with considerable indignity—of Glengariff’s partiality in this direction. And now it seemed to him a justifiable mortification he inflicted; and, besides, the questioner’s tone seemed not to admit of equivocation when he replied, “All this is as you state it, my lord; but to what utility?”

“Answer my questions, and I will afterwards answer you yours, sir,” the resurrectionised chieftain answered, in accents tremulous with suppressed, but not for that reason less formidable passion. “Answer me again without hesitation! You are then the betrayer of the innocence—the seducer of this unhappy young girl?—Gracious heavens!—the father of an unborn heir of shame and guilt, which will also call Emily Maughan mother?”

Camille was astonished in his turn at this accusation; and the terrible tone in which it was made, the implacable gleam of the eyes, made him feel happy that he was enabled to reply, with all the fervour of truth and innocence,—

“No, my lord; this latter is altogether a visionary imputation. I know nothing of what you speak now. I am almost a stranger personally to Miss Maughan, and have only expressed to Mr. Behringbright my own inclination to become her husband, not her acquiescence and consent to become my wife.”

“Then, basest of all the base!” returned the earl, or his phantom, in very unphantom-like accents, “it is as I have all along suspected. You have accepted a bribe to wed dishonour; and it is the infamously-betrayed and cast-off mistress of a wealthy villain, whose desires have wandered to another, that you accept as your wife!”

Camille felt justly indignant at this supposition ; and not a little pleased too, from the tone of its utterance, that he could repudiate it with still more emphasis.

" All this is still more unfounded, my lord, and you owe me an apology for the shameful imputation. The very supposition outrages me—and Mr. Behringbright, who I assure you I consider, upon my honour, totally incapable of the part you assign him in this drama, and which occurs to me as very little in his line of assumption. But I do not feel quite well to-night, and to submit to be catechised by a stranger is not altogether so pleasant that——"

" It is impossible for me to understand any thing, then, in the affair !" interrupted the earl, in an amazed and baffled tone. " And true it is my mother assures me it is Miss Graham who has revealed the weakness and misfortune of her friend ! Could *she* be induced so to abet and shelter Behringbright ? Why not ? To secure the rich prize to herself, and be rid of a dangerous rival ! If my mother's clairvoyance is not a delusion of her disorder, *she* is capable of any thing mercenary and vile. But be it how it may, this scoundrelly coxcomb proposes to make Emily Maughan his victim—or has already done so, in one form or other. And he owes me a satisfaction which I will have.—Monsieur Le Tellier !" he concluded, in tones that made the other start.

" Well, sir, but speak quickly. I wish to be at home. I am ill—very ill, I tell you !"

" I believe I am speaking to a man who has some pretensions to the rank of a gentleman—a person who knows his weapons—a professed duellist, since you challenged Mr. Behringbright formerly on a very slight provocation. I conceive myself to be injured in a personal respect by the style of your addresses to a young lady who has been the object of my own devoted—I mean, who has been my *sister's* governess—and I demand of you the satisfaction a man of honour is always willing to pay in such cases !" returned Lord Glengariff, flaming out regularly into fury.

" I, sir !—I, *milord* ! I have more need of a physician,

I believe, at this moment, than to answer you. But I repeat, you have no quarrel against me—nor has any man—in any thing that regards Miss Emily Maughan. Let me pass, I beseech you!” returned Camille, and in unmistakable accents of agony.

“Do you add cowardice to the rest of your villany? I tell you, I insist, Monsieur Le Tellier, that you shall name a second to whom I can send a gentleman on my part the first thing in the morning. And I will not leave this neighbourhood until I have extorted the real truth from your lips, or perish myself in the attempt!”

“Assist me, or I shall fall dead at your feet!” was the only reply to this objurgation; and Camille indeed staggered forward as if he had received some stifling blow in the chest, panting for breath.

“The fellow looks ghastly pale, in truth! Can fear do this, or can he be drunk?” Lord Glengariff exclaimed to himself, catching Camille by the shoulder, and steadying him, as he nearly reeled to the ground.

“No, I am not drunk—I am dying! Get me some help, in Heaven’s name! I feel as if I was poisoned.”

“You do not seem well, it is certain,” replied Lord Glengariff, struck with the words. “But who would think it worth while to poison you? Come! I require of you only a slight satisfaction for my mind. Make to me the confession of your principal’s villany, and I release you from all further consequences. It is on his head only I will visit the chastisement! Confess that you are hired to cover Behringbright’s treacherous cruelty by marrying the unhappy victim, and I have nothing further to say to you.”

“Were they my dying words—and I almost think they are, I suffer so cruel an anguish—I have nothing to blame myself with respect to Miss Emily Maughan,” groaned the unfortunate Camille; “unless I may be supposed to have injured her by my unauthorised demand of her hand.”

“Unauthorised!”

“Quite—quite—quite! But she will be guilty of my death, I verily believe, if you detain me longer!”

"Mr. Behringbright then put it into your head to make the offer, as I have before said?"

"No, indeed—no, indeed! Mr. Behringbright was extremely surprised. So was I myself! I feel now I was cajoled into making the proposition; but I never meant it! I feel like a dying man; but at all events I speak with the sincerity of one!"

"You proposed for Miss Maughan, and you did not mean it? Impudent coxcomb! this is too audacious!" roared Lord Glengariff. "But that unfortunate young lady is not so destitute of friends as you and your treacherous suborner no doubt imagine. I will compel you both to do her justice! I will cane *you* into begging her pardon on your knees, and I will compel the infamous Behringbright to marry her, or throttle him!"

"I beg it already, if I have offended her in a manner to require it, *milord*,—though, let me tell you, far handsomer and richer women have been proud to—to—to— But permit me meanwhile to die in my bed! I feel as if attacked by Asiatic cholera—I am, I fear! Are you aware whether it has appeared on these unhealthy lakes?"

Camille uttered a cry of pain as he said these words; and, indeed, the symptoms he now presented were in several respects not unlike those of the terrible disorder announced. Heaven knows whether it did not often get the credit of other destruction with as little cause! He looked lividly pale in the moonlight, and his features were racked with an expression of the severest agony. Lord Glengariff glared down at him, and perceived there was no counterfeiting in the matter. "Why, what ails you, man?" he exclaimed.

"I do not know, but I shall be better, I think, if I had a glass of eau-de-vie. I lodge at the little tavern hereby; if you would only deign to escort me there, for I am almost blind, and so giddy! I am a thousand times worse than sea-sick! For Heaven's sake,—in the name of that common humanity I ought not to invoke in vain,—support me, or I shall die where I stand! I will explain all I know, if you will but befriend me to some place where I can lie down and have medical aid!"

Lord Glengariff, in fact, was obliged to stretch his arms to hinder Camille from writhing downward to his feet; and, appalled and amazed with the exhibition of severe physical suffering he witnessed, the impetuous challenger suddenly found himself converted into the guide and support of his stricken foe!

CHAPTER XLIV

A GRAND SCENA ON A SMALL THEATRE.

THE Earl was very far from strong himself; for although—as the reader must now conjecture—his injury had been enormously exaggerated, he had really been wounded by the stag, and had lost a good deal of blood. But he managed to escort the reeling Frenchman the short distance that remained to be traversed to the “Red Herring” Tavern.

There, however, a new surprise awaited Camille, which for a few moments stunned his sense of physical suffering. Flamingo Brown met them at the door; and, at first imagining that Monsieur Le Tellier had been brought home something the worse for liquor, exclaimed, “Won’t you get it neither, my boy? Out at a *lady’s* party, and come home muddled, and your wife upstairs waiting for you, and has been there hours,—almost ever since you started!”

“My *wife*!” exclaimed Camille, in the words but not in the tones of heartbroken love and lamentation of the self-bereaved Othello. “*I have no wife!* Will the perplexities of this night ever cease? Dear friend, do you also add your mockery to so many disastrous events?”

“Then I was right as I thought, all along,” returned the shrewd Yankee. “And you’ll think now at last I *have* played a genuine friend’s part in the transaction! You had not, as I have said, been gone an hour to your dinner-party when a foreign lady arrived here, with a couple of bandboxes, announcing herself to be your wife,

whom you were expecting every moment, she said. A French dressmaker, or milliner, or *modiste*, she called herself, I believe, whatever that meant. I soon pricked my ears when I heard such a saying as that, you may believe, Frenchy, taking the interest I do in you ; and I heard her say that you would be back directly, she knew—and order dinner for two. All that went down like buttermilk, and she sent her boxes up to your room, and asked the good people here to light a fire there, and said she would wait for dinner till you came back.

“ *Dinner* was the rock she split on ; for that’s what gave me the first conviction she wasn’t what she pretended ; for it was plain she knew nothing about your movements, nor where you were, nor when you were likely to return. But the good folks of the house took all for gospel, and would have gone on doing so ; and if I hadn’t slipped up silently and locked the door on her, perhaps she’d a-robbed you, and got off quietly with the plunder ; for she’s been a-knocking these two hours to get out ; and I went and peeped through the keyhole, and saw she had a biggish bundle made up for carrying off with her, strapped in a pair of old garters. So I pitched a story to the people here that—yes—you had a wife, but she was a very wicked woman,—always robbing you when she could get a chance,—and that you had offered a reward of *thirty shillings* for any one who could catch her at it ; and—and——What’s the matter with him, Mr. What’s-your-name ? He seems an ugly sight more than drunk.”

“ Oh, my letters !—my letters ! Take me upstairs ; and, if it is as I think she—she—she has *poisoned* me too !” gasped Camille.

“ It was thinking of the letters made me so determined she should not stir a stump. But perhaps she has burned them, now I remember the fire. Can’t outdo the women, try what one can !” exclaimed Flamingo, staring rather blankly. But, supernaturally revived by the dread of the enormous loss in question, Camille staggered away before his two friends, as they might now be called, upstairs to his apartment. The landlord, his wife, and some other inmates, who had been impatiently awaiting the solution

of the mystery which had now puzzled them for hours, precipitately followed.

Camille unlocked the door the key of which Mr. Brown had long retained in spite of every species of expostulation ; having found it, according to the custom of Irish keys in general, on the outside of the door, when his restless curiosity had prompted him to "consider the ways" of the alleged wife of Camille Le Tellier.

This latter gentleman was also—as he had the best right—the first to enter the apartment ; and it would have been a *coup de théâtre* worthy of Parisian approbation, and consequently of British appropriation, to have seen the meeting when the ghastly, poisoned man, rushing in, found himself standing face to face with Olympe Loriôt !

The unfortunate lover of Madeleine Graham perceived at a glance what her slighted rival had been at. His leather trunk was cut into two divisions. Olympe had a parcel wrapped in an old shawl in her hand,—a parcel of the fatal letters ; for seals, and the envelopes of such documents, appeared at two of the openings. The correspondence was so numerous, it overflowed the measure.

"Olympe !—Traïtress !—It is then you !" exclaimed Camille, making a clutch at his securities.

Olympe instantly assumed the only style in which she could discern any hope of safety, or at least excuse,—the heroic wronged.

"Yes, Camille !" she exclaimed, "I am here ! The injured woman whom you are so well aware you have sought in marriage,—whose consent you have obtained. But, suspecting you but too justly of a perfidious intrigue with another woman—with Miss MADELEINE GRAHAM—I venture something—I venture all—to ascertain the truth. And I *have* ascertained it ! I have employed these hours of my inhuman detention to examine your correspondence with this YOUNG LADY, as, doubtless, you are still prepared to style her ; and I unhesitatingly pronounce that it convicts you both of being the worst of men and women. Let who will examine the proofs—this shawl is mine."

So saying, Mademoiselle Loriôt tore open her burden,

and flung the heap in a scatter, as it fell at the feet of her invaders.

The truth is, Olympe perceived there was no longer a possibility of executing her own plan of eloping with these documents; and she had not destroyed them, because she wished no kind of good fortune to Madeleine Graham which would place that slippery fish out of control: but, above all, the time she had devoted—having nothing else to amuse her imprisonment—to the perusal of these letters had fairly maddened her with jealousy.

With jealousy, and another almost as potent a feeling! for a part of the correspondence contained the most exasperating and insulting reflections on Mademoiselle Loriôt herself on the part of her young friend, who had applied the keenest sarcasm to the depreciation of her person, intellect, by-gones, future, objects, and obstacles in the power of imagination to conceive.

“Seize her! She is a robber!—and I am dying!” exclaimed Camille, sinking into a chair, after the position of affairs had been thus irresistibly obtruded on his cognisance.

“Dying!” exclaimed Olympe, in her turn staring at her former lover with an expression of horror and dismay. “Dying! and I was to secure these papers while you dined with her! Dying! and you have but just returned from a dinner with her! Dying! and she purchased *arsenic* yesterday! Camille, Camille, we are both her victims! You *are* poisoned, and I—I—I——But I survive for vengeance!”

Camille had fainted as the excited Frenchwoman uttered her denunciation.

“Wal, now, I’ll stake my chance of the next presidency, it’s all as the old griffin puts it!” said Flamingo Brown. “I’ll be sworn Miss Graham has put him something cooling in his soup; she’s the very gal!”

“Send for a surgeon! But at this hour of night, so remote from assistance as we are, the man will die before we can obtain medical advice!” exclaimed Lord Glengariff.

But precisely at this instant—as if it had been so ordained—two persons additional entered upon the scene.

And these two persons were Mr. Behringbright and Dr. Bucktrout.

"Cruel young man! whither have you gone? What do you purpose here?" exclaimed Mr. Behringbright, staring for specific information to Lord Glengariff, from the singular grouping of the scene before him.

"Pardon! pardon! Since all is known, I will confess all!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Loriôt, in a real frenzy of terror on this arrival, which she imagined to be part of a designed complete discovery. "I am, at all events, in no way culpable in this act of atrocious assassination! *She* induced me indeed to become the accomplice of her guilt so far as to promise to endeavour to secure these papers—which confess all the infamy of her relations with Camille Le Tellier—in order that she might be enabled to proceed without detection in entrapping you into a deplorable marriage once more, Mr. Behringbright!—whilst she entertained her unfortunate paramour at dinner. But little did I know—little did I dream—that *murder* was included in this programme, and that poison was for ever to remove from the earth a presence which accused her—a man whom she had once pretended to love so passionately, as these letters declare—in order that she might marry Plutus—unhappy richest of men!—in your person."

"What does this woman rave?" exclaimed Mr. Behringbright, though he was scarcely able to articulate. "Poison! assassination! It was a mad duel we apprehended; the dread of which, after you had stolen away from your bed, Glengariff, terrified Dr. Bucktrout into knocking me up, and making to me a statement of the extraordinary artifice you have practised. To what purpose?"

"I have not harmed the man. Whatever has been done to him has been done by somebody else, Mr. Behringbright," replied Lord Glengariff, sulkily enough. "But if you ask my object, I tell you it was simply to ascertain the truth of your relations with Emily Maughan. Amidst so many entanglements, I saw but one way—to bring you together face to face in my presence, and under my direct observation. I know that Emily Maughan—whatever her misfortunes may be—is incapable of falsehood. But I have

not laid a finger on this Frenchman ; and if any thing ails him, it is the work——”

“ Yes, yes—of *Madeleine Graham* !—of Madeleine Graham alone ! I am poisoned ! I am dying ! Have mercy on my soul, dear friends, and get me a doctor !”

“ Here is one !” exclaimed Lord Glengariff, horror-stricken at this denunciation. “ Doctor, administer some antidote.”

“ But for what ?—for what ? This is raving. What is this talk about my niece and poison ? Nothing ails this young man. It is impossible,” said Dr. Bucktrout, in the utmost confusion and perplexity.

“ Administer an antidote for arsenic, I repeat, and save my beloved Camille !” shrieked Olympe now. “ Save, oh, save him ! I can prove the shop where she purchased the fatal drug ! Save him, or I denounce you all as accomplices in the assassination ! I can explain the motives of the deed ! I can—I will ! They strew the ground here ! Mr. Behringbright, do you know this ring ? It was to be redeemed at the price of a thousand pounds, when I had secured these letters of Madeleine Graham’s to Camille Le Tellier. Insensate ! she knew all along who you were—that you were the rich Behringbright. She knew so from the disastrous night of the Théâtre St. Jacques ; and it was rather she who instigated me to that *déréglement*, in the hope to entrap you ; allured by the reputation of your vast wealth, and the insults you offered society in overwhelming its contemplation with a caricature of our sex in the person of the miserable Incognita. Yes ; whatever she may have pretended to you since, Madeleine Graham’s heart has always been at the devotion of this young man, whom she has, nevertheless, infamously assassinated to secure your riches. Read these letters, if you do not believe me ; and if you would learn to despise and hate her ! And if you cannot reconcile to yourself why, in recompense for the barbarous treatment and expelling to which you subjected me, by the agency of the police, at the Sparx *Gynécée*, I have endeavoured to secure you a wife who seems so much to your mind—know that it was always my purpose to make you the most miserable of men

by divulging what Madeleine Graham in reality is, when it should be irrevocably too late to repair your error!"

Mr. Behringbright must have looked the horror and astonishment that shook his soul to its foundations, in no light a degree; for even Flamingo Brown—a fellow as impervious to impressions as the armour-plates of a Monitor—who loved him not, and was at first tempted to feel diverted at the *exposé*—turned pale, and caught him by the arm. "Take care, sir; you seem ill!" he exclaimed.

"Do not attend to me! Save, if you can, this yet less miserable victim! Doctor, save this man; and save your niece from the gallows!"

"You shall not! you shall not!" shrieked Olympe. "I go with this step to denounce the whole conspiracy to justice! Expect its officers among you in a few minutes, —and owe at last to the unhappy and betrayed Olympe, Camille! your rescue from a gang of murderers."

So saying, Mademoiselle Olympe, eluding Flamingo's effort to detain her—with the dexterity to be expected from so experienced a member of the *corps de ballet*—swept past him, and rushed downstairs into the open road at a velocity which forbade all hope of overtaking her, if even any body's mind had been definitely made up to that purpose. But Dr. Bucktrout, Mr. Behringbright, and Lord Glengariff were now surrounding the unhappy patient.

"Somebody *has* poisoned the young man; that is certain, at all events. Most likely this d—d Frenchwoman herself; particularly if there is any truth in the statement that she is his wife!" said Dr. Bucktrout, after a short pause of consideration, finding no better could be said or done. "Landlord, bring some hot water and mustard!"

CHAPTER XLV

A FEMALE "SAGE SERENE AMIDST A CRUMBLING WORLD!"

If the life of Camille Le Tellier had been as dear to him as his own, Mr. Behringbright could not have watched and

laboured at its preservation with more indefatigable zeal than he devoted to the purpose during the ensuing hours in which it trembled in the balance it had been so unfairly cast into between time and eternity. The maltreated Romeo himself—though inclined at first to doubt and suspicion of the motives of all around him—became at last sensible of the kindness of his Tybalt, and in the midst of the horrible agonies he suffered, heaped thanks and blessings on his friendly rival's head.

Distrusting the skill—perhaps even the fair-play—of Dr. Bucktrout between death and his niece's victim, Mr. Behringbright called in the assistance of the two medical men he had formerly conveyed to Glengariff Castle, and who had the best reputation for their science in Killarney. These gentlemen were very willing to oblige so liberal a fee-master, and exerted themselves to the utmost in a stand-up conflict with the skeleton that banishes the ice-tipped dart; not yielding an inch without the extremest pressure, and as often as they lost ground regaining it by the most desperate antidotal exertions. They really thought Camille must be the millionaire's dearest friend.

"Save me this man's life, and I shall consider no reward too great!" he frequently exclaimed, when he imagined there was any slackening of zeal or effort. "A hundred pounds apiece, gentlemen, if you save me this one man's life!"

But there were other spectators who arrived to be witnesses that henceforth Monsieur Le Tellier—obscure foreigner as he was, obscure hole-and-corner as was the "Red Herring" Tavern—had fair-play there for his life. Two of the constabulary force of the county of Kerry were stationed by his bedside *en permanence*, and quite a little crowd of magistrates bustled in and out continually, watching the result of this strange affair, who had been all placed on the alert by the frantic denunciations and demands for aid of Olympe Loriôt. This ex-beloved of Camille Le Tellier in fact fancied, if she did not make matters pretty clear at once, she ran a very considerable danger of figuring as the murderess herself. The apothecary also who had sold the poison, seized with great alarm on ascertaining

the state of the law from a benevolent neighbour, an attorney, who communicated it gratis rather than miss the opportunity of completing the poor man's panic—the apothecary arrived, with a thousand apologies, and all the possible antidotes he could discover in a hasty flinging over of the leaves of the Dublin *Pharmacopœia*, to the sufferer's bedside.

And who shall say that even cheating does not work for good in this best of all possible worlds?—since, had not the arsenic sold by that well-to-do, sleek-ribbed, regular-place-of-worship-frequenting apothecary, and father of a family, been wonderfully adulterated by a large admixture of pulverised lime, the liberal dose administered to Camille Le Tellier must inevitably have produced the effect intended.

As it was, he had a terrible struggle for existence ; and he was several times so very like making an end of it, that Sir Patrick Kilrush, Deputy-Lieutenant and Justice of the Peace for the Killarney District, was for making out a warrant at once for the apprehension of the party accused in the incessant lamentations and outcries of Mademoiselle Loriôt. But Mr. Behringbright prayed so earnestly for some forbearance yet, and Lord Glengariff seconded him so zealously, and the doctors still spoke so hopefully, unwilling to relinquish their promised splendid fee, that the resolution was suspended. But meanwhile a constable, of that milder and less externally terrific class known as a detective, kept constant watch and ward over Prospect Palace—at least, on one of its fairest inmates, who, however, according to all accounts, appeared to be entirely unconscious of the extraordinary circumstances that collected daily crowds round the “Red Herring” Tavern : took her walks, drives, and boatings quite as usual, attended by a whimpering and affrighted old woman, who, under her powerful control, was obliged to go through the same farce, and—at a respectful but duly vigilant distance—by the aforesaid functionary in plain clothes.

But it is useless to linger over these details. Let me admit fairly at once that Camille Le Tellier—unlike the hero of a somewhat similar romance of reality, with whom

some foolish people will persist in confounding personages and events that have very little other relation than a chance resemblance—in spite of his visions of the wraith—in some degree, perhaps, in consequence of it—recovered from his formidable attack. That is to say, he did not absolutely die of it; but he was reduced to a pitiable extremity of weakness, could not swallow any thing but spoonmeat for weeks, and had the beauty on which he prided himself so much very seriously diminished, by the loss of his hair, his nails, and a considerable portion of the skin of his face and chest.

All the time of this momentous cure Mademoiselle Olympe continued as passionately devoted to her *ci-devant* lover as could possibly be evinced by howls over his unhappy destiny, and imprecations on his murderess. Really, I almost think she was sorry he did not die, so anxious and determined was the fond forgiving woman to avenge him!

Camille, nevertheless, exhibited so little gratitude for so much unexampled magnanimity of affection and generosity, that the first use he made of sufficient strength of voice and clearness of mind being restored to him to express his wishes, he implored Mr. Behringbright to remove “that figure of Alecto—that nightmare of a *funeste* recollection!” from his sight.

Mr. Behringbright complied with the request in his own way. When the doctors had come to an agreement that Monsieur Le Tellier would not die, he requested to speak with Mademoiselle Loriôt for a few moments alone.

He communicated to her then, in a few brief stern words, how the fact stood, in respect of Monsieur Le Tellier’s sense of her devotion, and went on to say, “You have a ring of mine, woman, of great value in your possession, and——”

“Yes,” interrupted Mademoiselle, with a vehemence due no doubt to the noblest conviction of her duty; “and I retain it as an irrefragable piece of evidence, which, in the interests of justice and of society, I propose to keep in security until their severity is satisfied!”

“Make certain, then, that the lash of the law shall

writhe the sharpest around your own person, *woman!*" continued Mr. Behringbright, who really seemed to think this designation quite a term of condemnation. "But I rather advise you to accept it as a gift, which I confer upon you—on certain conditions!"

"Ah! you speak reasonably now, Mr. Behringbright! But do not fear that I require a bribe to bear every imaginable evidence against that worst of women. The ring, I am assured, is worth a thousand pounds."

"It is worth more than that sum—much more! And it is yours, I repeat, on certain conditions."

"Mine! A thousand pounds and more! Name them."

"That you never open your lips again on this horrible occurrence, and that you quit the British dominions within twenty-four hours, and never return to them!"

"To the latter, willingly, yes; but for the former! What! suffer that *atroce* to escape the due punishment of her crimes! *Non, jamais!*"

"Then I send the police at once to obtain the restoration of my jewels! But I do not intend *she* shall escape the 'due punishment of her offences,' nor *he* either! My ring is worth two thousand pounds, I repeat!"

"If you promise me their punishment, Mr. Behringbright?—both their punishment?"

"I do, most solemnly."

"I can trust in your word, Mr. Behringbright. But to tell you the truth, I have already forwarded this piece of evidence, for security, to Paris. Give me ten pounds also, then, to convey me thither, and I abandon for ever this land without taste, this man incapable of a generous sentiment—of any possible return upon himself!"

Mademoiselle Loriôt accordingly departed from Kilarney, attended with no particular blessings on the part of those whom she had most laboured to serve and benefit. Such is the fate of goodness, even in its most direct manifestations, in our hard unbelieving age. I am not, however, of opinion that Mademoiselle really proceeded to Paris in the speedy manner she had promised. Her relations with Monsieur Carlier were not at that time all that

could be wished ; and a jewel of so much value, in her hands, at Paris might have excited attention elsewhere than in the jewellers' shops. Besides, to say truth, the susceptibility of a nature "open as day" to tender impressions had been awakened in Mademoiselle's bosom by the engaging personal characteristics, the freedom of manner and conversation, the favourable reports he gave every where of his own position in society and tangible allotment of dollars, of Mr. Flamingo Brown, the American. And as this gentleman was suddenly summoned home at about the same period—or, at least, to that part of his home called New York, where, the civil war having broken out, some excellent contracts offered themselves to speculative industry—Mademoiselle Loriôt took the whim to ship herself at Liverpool in his society. To be sure, motives more sensible and substantial had probably their weight with Olympe ; for Mr. Brown assured her, with irresistible eloquence, backed by any amount of figures, that he would and could turn the worth of her fine ring, in a few months, into a splendid fortune *for her*. I know for certain that they sold it together in London, for exportation to St. Petersburg.

This was the first and a very efficient commencement of a series of countermoves against justice in the case, that finally resulted in a complete checkmating of that purblind player.

On recovering his faculties sufficiently to be catechised on the subject, Monsieur Le Tellier refused to make any charge against any one in aught relating to his illness. Mr. Behringbright's two doctors held their peace ; and Dr. Bucktrout declared, night and day, that his patient was suffering under a violent fit of indigestion, although he strongly suspected in addition, that some stewed mushrooms he had partaken of at dinner with a friend on the day of his seizure had, in reality, been a mess of the poisonous fungus, vulgarly called toadstool, gathered by mistake. The magistrates, and the police and people in general (including all London), who scented some delightfully horrible revelation at hand, were thrown at fault. But there was no remedy for it, since the injured party

himself refused to declare any aggrivement. Finally, police and magistrates and all retired discomfited from the field, even withdrawing their secret official in a huff from his post of constant surveillance on the suspected person.

Certainly this was a most Christianlike procedure on the part of Monsieur Le Tellier, especially considering the damage he had sustained in personal appearance. But he had his mundane motives too ; or else, could the influence Mr. Behringbright established over his mind, and exerted in this merciful sense, be due to the weakness consequent on his dangerous illness, or the better incentive of gratitude for so much totally undeserved kindness ?

A mixture of motives—(mostly are the threads of light and darkness mingled with us, poor mortals, in our guiding influences)—probably swayed with Camille Le Tellier in thus submitting himself to the decrees of Mr. Behringbright ; for it is certain that gentleman stood forward on the occasion as the guardian genius of Madeleine Graham, in saving her from the consequences of her rash interference with the regular movements of destiny in the disposal of the lives of inconvenient men.

Why did he so ? He could not, surely, affect to disbelieve in Madeleine's guilt ; the evidence was so very clear. In private, his doctors assured him their patient had been *poisoned* ; he was a witness himself of his great agonies, and that he presented all the symptoms of the kind of poison indicated in the denunciations of Olympe, the admission of the apothecary, the signature of the names in the latter's honest books ! The certainty that Madeleine had alone remained in possession of the deadly drug—the dinner to which the unfortunate Camille had been invited, at so much risk of displeasure in other quarters—the incidents of the coffee—of the peculiar basin of powdered sugar—all which the Frenchman recalled to his recollection as soon as his first acute sensations were in some measure quieted by the skill of his medical allies—here was an abundant *corpus delicti*. The motives of the crime Mr. Behringbright—when he came to consider things, and piece circumstances together—could be at no loss to assign.

Olympe, on being questioned to explain her rhapsodical accusations, had made no further secret of any portion of her acquaintance and familiarity with Madeleine Graham. She felt justified to herself, by her wrongs in the affair, even to exaggerate the general naughtiness of their conjoint transactions. She put upon Madeleine the whole shabbiness and disgrace of that original meretricious design on the wealthy Behringbright at the St. James's Theatre. The friendship of the wicked is by no means that of Jonathan and David ; it is a chain of mouldy hemp that does not abide any rough strain. Flamingo Brown was another case in point, who finding that all his overtures for a renewed friendly understanding in business matters with Mr. Behringbright went for nothing, or worse than nothing, threw off all restraint on the score of his tacit alliance with Miss Graham, and favoured the millionaire with a full, true, and particular account of his reasons to suppose that Camille Le Tellier had all along been her preferred lover, and the merchant's wealth alone the object of her seeming reciprocation of his tenderness.

Thinking over matters under the lights now presented to him, doubtless they adjusted themselves in very forcible and unpleasant "concatenations accordingly" to Mr. Behringbright. He remembered the fascinating glance of sudden selection on board the Belfast steamer ; and it now occurred to him that there *was* an irrepressible look of recognition in that first shock. Camille's otherwise unaccountable fixing of a quarrel upon him, however promoted by the malignant diversion Flamingo Brown had taken in fomenting it to a challenge, he had by no means forgotten. The Frenchman's stealthy entry into Sir Orange Graham's house next recalled itself forcibly to his mind ; and he remembered that the original misdirection of his ideas on the subject was from the seemingly artless and careless explanation of Madeleine Graham.

Yet more startled and amazed at his own simplicity, the recollection struck him with what easy art Madeleine had announced her intention of an excursion to the Lakes of Killarney simultaneously with his own. Nothing could seem more natural, more spontaneous ; nothing now seemed

less so. All subsequent experience and revelation satisfied him of Madeleine's perfect governing power and supremacy in her family movements and arrangements. Dr. Bucktrout—Mrs. Bucktrout—if they were not exactly her *âmes damnés*, how blindly and earnestly the poor souls acted as stokers in the dark engine which Miss Graham drove along the sinuous line which was to lead her to high fortune!

But if any thing had been wanting to Mr. Behringbright's complete *satisfaction*, besides all these links in the chain, there were the letters of Madeleine to Camille, liberally scattered at his feet by the vengeful Olympe—letters which I do not say that Mr. Behringbright could or ought to have refrained from examining, under the recommendation that had accompanied their broadcasting, but which Camille himself, on the first return of consciousness, entreated him to peruse—letters that affrighted Mr. Behringbright: seeing how their passionate recklessness and overflow revealed indeed the most absorbing devotion and preference for the young man whom she had yet devoted to death, in the hope and resolution to secure the millionaire's wealth.

He was terrified, I say. He trembled at the terrific gulf he had escaped,—into which he saw another so frightfully precipitated. How likely was it—how infinitely likely—that the same or a worse fate might have been in store for him! Since she treated thus a man whom she had loved, what might she not have done in the end to a man whom she had never loved, and whose gold was her sole object in feigning to love?

Mr. Behringbright knew by himself how joyless a possession vast wealth was. What would it have been to this woman of all-craving, unsatisfied desires, when she had attained the worthless price of her crimes and betrayals?

For what related to Emily Maughan, Mr. Behringbright dared not think—dared not conjecture the cruel enormity of Madeleine's offences against her, lest he should lose all patience and pity for the reckless slanderess. Only he was convinced in general that whatever she had stated to Emily's disparagement was false, without a word

of defence on the part of Emily herself. But Camille Le Tellier's assurances and full confessions, in moments when he imagined himself on the verge of death, left not a shadow of doubt upon the point.

Camille declared, and most truly, that his whole acquaintance with Miss Maughan consisted in her very proper and honourable, though firm and unflinching, reprobation of so much of his clandestine relations with Madeleine as she was aware of, and her anxious, friendly efforts to break off the affair. He avowed that all he had subsequently done in regard to her—his proposals for Emily—were the insidious promptings of his treacherous real object, and that Emily herself was perfectly unacquainted with the whole nefarious, underhand transaction.

Mr. Behringbright listened to all this, and gave up the comprehension of his age.

Still, as far as in him lay, he determined, after many a sleepless night—many a long, painful reverie—to disentangle the terrible knot, without any rude rending of the involved skein. And this the rather, perchance, that his own heartstrings were woven into some of the subtlest tangled threads; for though I should be glad to do so, I cannot say that even the discovery of the vileness and perfidy of Madeleine Graham quite destroyed the effect of her elaborate spells. It very often happens indeed, alas! that the nobler the heart betrayed,—the less the reason it has to cherish the unworthy object,—the more powerful and clinging in the roots do the twined fibres adhere to their worthless convolution. A noble nature cannot, will not, dares not bring itself to the true comprehension of the case. It is a kind of denial of God, and of the divinity of God in the human soul, to believe in such unfathomable faithlessness.

Still, neither could so clear and logical an intellect as Mr. Behringbright had long enjoyed and cultivated, refuse assent to the overwhelming array of proof and conviction.

Bitter, bitter, bitter hours, and even days, did Mr. Behringbright spend, holding a silent assize over all these mazed and crowding evidences.

It was unnecessary to summon the accused into court.

It was one of those direct and unmistakable judgments, wherein, according to ancient traditions of legality, it was not needful to try a criminal,—when he was taken with a *red hand*.

Sometimes George Cocker Behringbright imagined he must have been bewitched. He, who had had such a wife, to believe in a woman again!

But he came at last to an anchor—to a decision. Perchance it still cost him a strange pang; but all the more for that did he determine on what should and must be done.

As soon as Camille Le Tellier was pronounced out of danger of his life, and that he had retrieved strength of mind and body to endure the discussion of his most momentous interests as a living man, Mr. Behringbright held a long conversation with him. For a considerable time they differed on an important point in the matters submitted for debate. At last Camille yielded to the kindly authority of his preserver, for so Mr. Behringbright might well be considered—since it is certain that only the most immediate and unremitting care and medical skill had saved Miss Graham's victim from so large a dose even of adulterated arsenic.

Mr. Behringbright had then another still more earnest and eager discussion with Lord Glengariff, who also spent a good deal of his time at the "Red Herring," before he won him finally over to the opinion and resolution he had himself formed. Then Lord Glengariff proceeded, in company with Dr. Bucktrout, to Prospect Palace, where Miss Graham still remained, innocently unconscious of all that was going on every where else to her scandal and prejudice.

It is true that it was only that very morning the silent embargo on her movements, in the shape of the detective officer, had been removed,—a haunting observation whereof Miss Graham had been as well aware as any of those hapless offenders in the good old times, whose misdeeds attended upon them in visible bleeding apparitions to themselves, albeit unseen to all others. But she preserved more calm and *sang froid* than Macbeth at his feast, and

never took the least notice of her Banquo. I think she was not at all obliged or thankful to Rooney, honest fellow ! when he rejoicingly informed her that he was quite sure that ugly fellow, Tim Riley, the detective, had been ordered to take his snout out of their potatoes.

"And so, as I tould the master, there would be no occasion to order you off the premises, miss ; for it would be sure to end, one way or another, in a day or two. And what signifies all the fine people turning up their noses, and vowing they wouldn't stay if you did ? Never having been in trouble themselves, the poor mane snakes, what can they know about it, to feel for another ? And you not intruding at all upon their company, miss, no more than if you were in a hiding in Connemara, but keeping your own and your poor aunt's, in your own rooms, and taking no notice of any thing, no more than if there was nothing happening in life at all, than in the daisies of a churchyard to the poor sows below ! And to hear Mistress Sparrowgrass talking as if your sleeping under the same roof could contaminate her big raw-boned daughters, with no more sinse of iligance in them than the tongs in a grate ! And to hear the silly young spalpeen belonging to them thanking his stars night and day you hadn't honoured him with your preference,—as if you would have thought the likes of a skinned rat's-tail like him worth the expinse of a dose ! It made me quite sick and sorry, it did, miss, to hear them talk ; and I'm glad the young man that's caused all the trouble has come round again ; for, from all accounts that I hear, he was noways worth the disgrace of being hanged for ; and even transportation is a thing I should not like incurring myself for such a poor vagabone !"

This artless sympathy was no doubt very consolatory. Rooney did unto others as he would have expected to be done unto if he had been a Ribandman, and obliged by lot to put some estate-agent or tithe-proctor comfortably under the sod from a hedgeside. But Madeleine Graham had been reared in a city, in city notions, and had finished her education at a select academy in London, where, after all, something was to be learned, if it was only respect for

public opinion. She therefore felt the unpleasantness of her position, and the well-meaning Kerryman's consolations produced rather a contrary effect.

She was very uncomfortable indeed when the first rumours of discovery reached her ears. And yet, that dreadful night after the dinner-party she had imagined, in the culmination of her terror and remorse, that she would thankfully have resigned every possible advantage the deed was to secure to be made certain that she had failed in it. But when the tidings flew all over Killarney, at daybreak, of the strange and sinister event that had come to pass at the "Red Herring;" when it was known that for certain Olympe Loriôt had applied for assistance to the magistrates and police; when her aghast aunt demanded explanations of the frightful enigma of her, for the first time, in the language of authority and menace,—then Madeleine Graham haughtily refused to give any; professed herself most cruelly insulted by her aunt and her suspicions, and, shutting herself in her own room, meditated for a long time on the propriety, and even necessity, of extricating herself from her position in the only way that seemed to remain—

Suicide!—Inflicting on herself the doom she had dared to meditate for another!

But it does not always happen that those who have the courage to inflict, have the courage to endure. It is strange how people who have spent, one may say, their whole lives making others miserable, resent the least retaliation. Who thrashes a tipsy wife with a more merciless arm than an habitual drunkard? The philosophy of it all lies in a nutshell: the criminal, whom self-love and selfishness have made so, dislikes retributory action and consequences in exact proportion to the intensity of those prompting and swaying influences radiating from *self*.

In short, Madeleine did not at all relish the idea of self-destruction. And this apart from all consideration in regard to a future existence, and the announced chastisement of offences therein. Perhaps she had no very distinct impression that any such were to be apprehended.

Of course she had been brought up in all the proper general notions on the subject. But really these have not that practical influence on people's ideas, the way they are mostly taught, that would be desirable. At all events, Madeleine's notions of the inconvenience of depriving the world of her presence were strictly limited to this side of things; but even there alone they seemed insuperable. She shrank from the idea of the physical pain she must suffer, I fancy, more than any thing else; and what gate of death could she expect to open unjarringly to allow of her passage? Even from shame and detection so enormous and so absolute, she shrank to extricate herself at so dread a turnpike toll!

What she resolved upon was not without its fortitude and resolution, nevertheless, and more in keeping with her proper tone of firm-mindedness and tenacity of purpose. She determined, come what would—in common parlance—to *die game!* to own nothing, deprecate nothing; to go on exactly as if nothing had happened, and baffle her enemies' assaults—if any such were intended—by coolness and composure, rather than by any energetic action of repulse and refutation. Among her stores of French maxims for the regulation of life and manners, Madeleine very well remembered "*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse.*"

It was certainly the best policy. Very likely the policy she would have adopted if she had had the misfortune to succeed in her grand *coup*, and then to have been found out. She would have answered the most searching interrogative probings with perfect candour and simplicity; she would have told all her lies in the form of truths, and have stood at a bar of criminal justice in an attitude so elegant, and with a smile so full of the serenity of conscious innocence and harmlessness, that people would have believed her face against herself, in every other shape of conviction. And this is as it should be; such natures are so rare that the general principles of humanity ought not to suffer infringement from their existence, and the power to appear innocent ought always to be taken in some sort as the actuality; at least, such wise personages as judges and juries appear to think so; and

what is the present writer, that he or she should presume to differ?

Indeed, Miss Graham preserved so much of this noble *sang froid* and determination that she really frightened both her uncle and Lord Glengariff in the interview they now sought and obtained with her on the subject Mr. Behringbright had intrusted to their management. She inquired of Mr. Bucktrout, quite feelingly, whether the poor stupid Frenchman who had taken it into his head to commit *suicide*, because she had finally declined the offer of his nonsensical affections, was out of danger, as she should be quite uncomfortable if he died on so absurd an occasion? And of Lord Glengariff she asked whether it was thought, on the other hand, that the Frenchman's senseless raving jealous wife, or whatever she was, had attempted to poison the poor fellow?

Dr. Bucktrout, albeit unused to the melting mood, covered his face with his hat, and sobbed aloud behind that entrenchment; but Lord Glengariff significantly informed Miss Graham that the identity of the supposed murderess was proved by the numerous letters in the possession of Monsieur Le Tellier; and thereupon concluded with a request on the part of Mr. Behringbright, which, after a few moments of profound reflection, Madeleine did not think proper to refuse. She accordingly put on her bonnet and shawl, and quietly accompanied the two gentlemen, in a close carriage, to the "Red Herring" Tavern.

What was the nature of this grand determining argument addressed to the young lady deserves, however, the honourable distinction of a separate chapter of explanation.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CLIMAX.

ABOUT the second day of Mr. Behringbright's benevolent watchfulness by the sick-bed of Camille Le Tellier, when

favourable symptoms had begun to manifest themselves in the patient, and all the worst was known as to the occasion of his disorder, Lord Glengariff presented himself, as was also usual with him, three or four times a-day, in the apartment of the sufferer.

The young earl's kindness and sympathy in his great misfortune had been Mr. Behringbright's almost only consolation and support. Not ignorant of heart-woes, he had learned to comfort them; and, indeed, the young man had suggested a very natural reason for rejoicing rather than grieving over the calamity that had occurred, since it had happened in time to prevent the betrayed lover of Madeleine Graham from falling completely into the deepest pitfall ever laid for his unlucky steps in love-affairs. That was surely an advantage Mr. Behringbright could not refuse to acknowledge, and it had not a little comforted and strengthened him in his misfortune; but the perusal of Madeleine's letters to her Camille, so different in style from those she addressed to her husband elect,—it was that most materially contributed to his disenchantment.

Mr. Behringbright's own mind was now, in fact, at sufficient freedom to notice the deepened shade of melancholy that overspread the young earl's visage; and yet he seemed to bring good news. He had received a telegram from his mother announcing that she had arrived in time to find Emily still in Belfast, but on the point of quitting that city and the house of Sir Orange Graham together, in consequence of a strangely peremptory dismissal on the part of the mistress of it, who had ordered her off at an hour's notice, without any imaginable reason that she could discover. And this, although only a couple of days remained until she was to leave for England, by her own wish and stipulation, after Olympe Loriôt's revelation of the scandals concerning her, started by Madeleine Graham in relation to Camille Le Tellier.

Slight scandals these, however, compared with those it then became Lady Glengariff's painful duty to reveal to Emily Maughan! Scandals the countess now declared which every visible circumstance and probability, every imaginable sign and proof of innocence on the part of the

slandered girl, overwhelmed with refutation. Nay, that Lady Graham herself declared, even when she was given to understand who had made the injurious statement, were so utterly false and unfounded that she thought her daughter must have been beside herself to make the charge. But to complete the refutation, on hearing with what she was traduced, far from showing reluctance to meet her accuser, Emily Maughan had insisted at once on proceeding to Killarney, and, face to face with her there, refuting the infamous and wholly unfounded charges that had been brought against her. The countess intimated she had willingly acceded to the proposal, and the telegram concluded by stating that their arrival might be expected that same evening, at the utmost speed of express train and post.

Somewhat to Mr. Behringbright's surprise, Lord Glengariff announced this intelligence without any sign of satisfaction the former thought he would have experienced in thus obtaining what had been his anxious desire. His manner was, indeed, sombre and preoccupied, and what he said after he had made the statement alarmed Mr. Behringbright with the notion that, in spite of all he had heard and witnessed to disprove Madeleine Graham's varied calumnies, he seemed still haunted with the notion that *his* conduct towards her admitted of a doubtful interpretation.

"I have to ask of you a great favour, dear Mr. Behringbright," the young earl said; "it is that you will allow me to persevere in my original plan—deception, if you like to call it so,—and that Emily Maughan may suppose she is replying to the questions I would still address to her, as to a man upon his possible deathbed, who can make no use that might be displeasing to her of the fullest admission of the facts of the case. My mother and Emily are of course entirely ignorant of the turn events have taken—of the disclosures that have been made. They will arrive at Glengariff, and remain so for a short time. I shall return to my couch, and expect your co-operation in enabling me to ascertain the real state of Emily's feelings towards me; *all* we have heard may be

calumny and delusion, for my mother adds to her telegram, that even her letter inviting Emily's return has been tampered with most insidiously."

Mr. Behringbright coloured again, as he had on two former remarkable occasions when this delicate subject had been in debate; and feeling that he did so, rendered him still more unwilling to seem unwilling. He endeavoured to express hesitation on another score than the real one.

"Why should you prolong your mother's anxiety, and expose Emily to an afflicting scene? It is impossible, after all we have known and ascertained, that a breath of suspicion can linger on Emily's name or conduct," he said, deprecatingly.

"My mother is aware that my worst ailment was the fever of suspicion and doubt that preyed upon me regarding Miss Maughan; or deem you she would have left me to die alone?" replied Lord Glengariff, sadly enough, and with a formality and unusualness in styling *Emily Miss Maughan* that struck his interlocutor. "But as regards Emily's conduct, I never really believed in a single word that was uttered against her. I tried, but I could not. If she had simply stated to me, with that holy womanlook of hers, that it was all false, and would have married me, I would have married her with a perfect assurance that I had given my honour into the keeping of the truest and purest of women. The point I would ascertain related not to these matters; but as the whole chance of my righting myself in existence lies in being satisfied of the utter hopelessness, or possibilities for hope, of my affection towards Emily, give me this only chance in the way I desire."

Thus pressed, Mr. Behringbright, though he felt all the embarrassment of the position, both for Emily and himself, finally acquiesced in the plan. Perhaps he had some vague under-yearning of curiosity to ascertain whether the notion, which he had still never clearly suffered himself to analyse in his own most secret thoughts, was well founded. Perhaps it gave him a kind of secret bitter enjoyment to consider that he was about to witness one

more proof of the heartlessness and instability of female nature. Emily would take to her noble suitor, no doubt, when once she could really be brought to believe he was in earnest in his proffers, and that all other obstacles were removed, saving such a foolish barrier as a preference for another. Yet, again, could it be possible that she preferred another?—such another as she whom a detestable, assassin-souled coquette had, for his money—and for his money only——But there Mr. Behringbright halted in his reflections, and blushed at his own conceit to fancy that in reality Emily Maughan could ever have given him reason for the suspicion. She never had, he would have it to himself now. She had got into a habit of blushing and looking foolish when she spoke to him before he procured her the Glengariff situation in Ireland, no doubt. But what of that? He dared say, now he recollected, he looked silly enough himself on those occasions. And if he had been the object of a simple, childish liking in those days, by so much the more would Emily's certain acceptance of Lord Glengariff's renewed offers go to prove the inherent fickleness and subjection to worldly and mercenary impulses of the modern female heart.

So reasoned Mr. Behringbright. Whether he reasoned well or not speedily came on to the proof. But I think people who have attained conviction on any point are seldom so shaky and irresolute when it is put to the strain as was this gentleman when he was summoned by Lord Glengariff to fulfil his part in testing the theory, beside his couch of supposed grievous and dangerous hurt, in Glengariff Castle. Word was brought that the countess and Miss Maughan were expected by the next train, which was nigh due; and to avoid the shadow of any private or aside interference with the device, Mr. Behringbright felt bound to leave his other strangely-constituted patient, and cross to the castle.

He found Lord Glengariff stretched in bed, in a darkened room, with all the appearance of an invalid, though he was dressed under his nightgown, and with a face so pallid and agitated that it had needed little aid of art to give the notion of a person dangerously excited, and exhausted

too. But that it had received with the help of powder and some lines of blue chalk, and his lordship had even added the somewhat unnecessary and ghastly adornment of a few splashes of red ochre over the breast-front, where he had, in reality, been rather fiercely gored by the dying stag. The illusion was completed by an array of surgical straps and bandages and medicine bottles, and the presence of Dr. Bucktrout, who had also been required to attend, and, in his niece's interests possibly, did as he was requested in every thing, very humbly and submissively. Nothing more was required to complete the *mise en scène* when Mr. Behringbright was seated by the bedside as commiserating friend, looking and feeling also extremely alarmed and uncomfortable. Money is a valuable commodity; but I believe the millionaire would not have begrudged several thousand pounds to have been released from the uncomfortable necessity of this climax to the discomforts of his visit to Glengariff Castle.

Luckily, the Killarney train was particularly punctual that day, and within a few minutes of the hour they were expected, the countess and her charge drove up to the gates of the castle. Neither did they make any unnecessary delay when once they had arrived. Lord Glengariff had hardly time to start up in his bed, and sink back again on the pillows—Mr. Behringbright to shuffle half a dozen times on his chair—ere the bed-chamber door opened, and Mr. Molloy—himself in *costume de voyage*—entered to announce, “My lady and Miss Maughan, my lord and your honour!” and the two fellow-travellers appeared, in the dress they had worn on the journey, arm in arm. Or rather, Lady Glengariff—who was greatly agitated—supported herself on her young companion; who, on the contrary, came with a firm, resolved, perfectly self-possessed step. Emily looked pale, nevertheless—so pale, as to be absolutely colourless in her quiet brown straw bonnet and black stuff burnous. You would have said, Charlotte Corday going to execution—she looked so young, so fair, so marbled into a fixity of resolution by a deep-seated, internal conviction of the rightfulness of what she had done, or was to do—so equal to what extremes of suffer-

ing and calamity might yet be in the power of fate to inflict.

Lord Glengariff read his doom in Emily's first glance,—a glance full of compassion, earnest sympathy, affectionate inquiry : but not all the sum of these is love ! Mr. Behringbright could not but look at her with a kind of wonder in the fascination that drew his eyes towards her. Emily scarcely seemed to him the same person ; so transfigured was the once soft, yielding, timorously-shrinking and sensitive girl, by the high thoughts and determination that had changed her in a few weeks into an heroically-determined though half heart-broken woman !

I believe she saw him before she saw Lord Glengariff, though her glance seemed first to fall upon the latter. A kind of shock and quiver passed over her face ; then all was calm and resolute as before.

It should be remembered that at this time Emily was entirely ignorant of the discovery that had re-established her own purity and innocence in the fullest light, and had revealed the perfidy and vileness in all other respects of Madeleine Graham. It was destined to form the subject of many future hinted revelations of the public press, but had not yet passed local bounds. She had reason to consider herself as presented at a tribunal for judgment, already convinced of her guilt. Her first words expressed this belief, when Lord Glengariff, having faintly received his mother's fond caress, requested that he might be raised in his bed, and that Miss Maughan would shake hands with him, to show she bore him no ill-will for having brought her from such a distance to so uncomfortable a scene. "Though," he added purposely, "I am greatly better to-day—have been better ever since my mother complied with my earnest wishes in requesting your presence, Miss Maughan ; and Dr. Bucktrout is now quite assured I shall recover to all my former health and strength."

"Quite certain," echoed Dr. Bucktrout.

"I am exceedingly glad to hear it, Lord Glengariff," said Emily, very gently, but with no tremble of emotion in her tones—some greater feeling had swallowed up all

the rest; "but until you are satisfied that the atrocious calumnies against me are such, pardon me if I refuse on my own part to subject you to what you, or any other honourable man, ought to deem a degradation."

Mr. Behringbright thereupon—to his own surprise—took up the proper utterance. They had exchanged no other greeting as yet but that silent shock of feeling. "There is no occasion, Miss Maughan," he said, "to enter into miserable explanations of the kind. The person associated with you in the detestable misrepresentation—Camille Le Tellier himself—has completely exonerated you of the remotest touch of suspicion, and confessed that he had no authority whatever for his presumptuous proposals and bargainings respecting you."

Emily looked a little surprised, but also deeply gratified. "I am spared, then," she murmured, with that intensest sigh of emotion, a *white flush*, overspreading her fair countenance, "the necessity of a most painful and degrading denial of the whole infamous imputation. To no one who could have required more of me would I ever have opened my lips in refutation."

"And this is the girl," thought Mr. Behringbright, "whom I have found so tearful and timorous—in other things!"

"Mr. Behringbright has spoken the exact facts of the case. You shall hear the particulars at more length afterwards.—You, mother, also," resumed Lord Glengariff, anxiously cutting the former short in a kind of apology he began to utter. "Let me proceed now, while I have strength to inquire, with some questions I must ask and have answered still, dearest Emily Maughan! or die of weariness and suspense. And first of all—answer me truly, on your living soul, to this!—(heed not the presence of him of whom I make the demand, or of any man, for I constitute myself your champion to the death, and you hear that I shall soon be in a condition to 'brook mine armour' in the cause, as they say in the romances)—has Mr. Behringbright himself behaved to you always as a true and honourable man, or has he, at some period, made promises to you which he has not fulfilled?"

"Lord Glengariff——" began the personage so spoken of, vehemently ; but his lordship interrupted him,—

"Peace ! peace ! Have you not promised me I should know the truth from her own lips ?—and from them alone will I accept an oracle !" And he turned to Emily with an implicitness in the noble youthful candour of his looks that more than the words declared he expected one.

And such he received in reply, and probably in more senses than upon the question he propounded.

"Mr. Behringbright never made me any promises whatever, of any sort," said Emily, in a low but perfectly distinct and—so to speak—adamant-convictioned tone, "because his goodness always anticipated any possible demand I could have made upon it ; and if he has ever not behaved to me and mine as an 'honourable man,' it was when he became an angel of beneficence and generosity."

Lord Glengariff gave a deep sigh, and closed his eyes for a moment ; while his mother, who had moved round to his side, gently pressed his forehead with her hand—her favourite soothing action to herself. And though it was an action that often made him impatient, it seemed to comfort him now.

"Thanks, dear mother," he said. "No man has lost every thing who has so kind and loving a mother left ! But I *must* proceed ! Tell me then, dear Emily, do you really love another—prefer another—to all I have offered you—all I still could offer ? Myself—my title—my possessions—my never-failing love ?"

Emily only faltered for an instant, and then replied, while a burning blush suffused the countenance so pale but a moment before, "I do—I must ever, Lord Glengariff ! I grieve to be forced to say it, but from the first instant that my heart opened at all to impressions of the kind, I have preferred another, not only to you, but to all mankind—to my own self infinitely !—and so must continue to the latest hour of my existence. But be comforted," she continued with a grateful emotion, and anxiety to allay the pain she inflicted, hurrying her on her expressions much beyond her intentions : "it is also the truth, as I informed you, that the person who is the unal-

terable object of the master-feeling of my existence does not return my affection,—is even ignorant of it,—is betrothed to another! And though that other is the wickedest of women, I have no means of proving her so, and he adores her; and henceforth I am silent for ever on the subject."

There was a brief silence after this overflow; and when the Earl of Glengariff spoke again, it was in accents as weak and tremulous as a child's, but instinct with the heroic generosity and fortitude of the manliest resolve.

"You hear, Mr. Behringbright! Happiest of men, were you but aware of your happiness! The vile obstacle that existed between you is removed by her own atrocity of ill-doing to obtain all that which Emily Maughan despises and casts to the wind for *your* sake—yes, for *your* sake! It is in vain to stand any longer on a weak punctilio. Emily herself will not disavow that it is you whom she prefers to all mankind—to youth—to rank—to a yet more distinguished social position than your own! Heaven bestows on your good and charitable and affectionate nature this priceless consolation and recompense! Take it—and at last ungrudgingly—from my hand!"

And Lord Glengariff, with a gesture that Emily could not anticipate or attempt to withdraw from in time, took her hand, pressed it for a moment to his lips, and placed it in that of Mr. Behringbright. And the latter received it, not coldly and lifelessly resigned, but clutching it to his heart in a passion of tenderness and gratitude, to which words could do no justice, but which he endeavoured to express as follows:

"You have restored my belief in the angelic purity and superiority to every mercenary feeling in your sex, dearest Emily. And it is to you alone I can look henceforth for consolation after the baseness and treachery of Madeleine Graham, who had as nigh made me her victim as she had made you. I have discarded her for ever from my heart and presence, and there is no one left in the world whom I would make my wife but you, if your hand can follow where you confess your heart has been devoted so long!"

"You speak to me dreams—enigmas. I am surely asleep, and imagine all this! But were it possible to be

—could all be true—do not imagine, Mr. Behringbright, that I would accept, on a momentary impulse of anger or disappointment, what your calm reflections——Mistake me not so far! I do not appear here as the accuser of Madeleine Graham, but as my own defender from a gross imputation. But her charge against me may have been merely the result of a personal pique against me—not of her own criminality. I am aware of nothing but a pardonable imprudence in her relations with Monsieur Camille Le Tellier, and——”

“Pardonable imprudence,” exclaimed Lord Glengariff, “when she dared to accuse you of the dishonour she had herself incurred with him—when she directed her paramour to pour his vile effusions to her in your name, to secure herself, at any sacrifice of you, from the danger of detection!”

“When she must have opened my letter inviting your return, and inserted a forged postscript forbidding it. By what devil’s art I know not; but certain I am I never penned it,” exclaimed Lady Glengariff.

“My niece writes several hands,” said Dr. Bucktrout, unable to resist the natural impulse of a man who had all his life run with the hounds, to have a share in at the death now; “and you remember, Mr. Behringbright, the letter *that* American presented to you, when he affected so curiously to stand up for my poor girl’s innocence.”

“I do—it is here,” said Mr. Behringbright, producing one from his pocket, and flinging it on the bed. Lady Glengariff snatched it up, and exclaimed with almost a wild laugh, “Good heavens! my very handwriting!—so identically that I could scarcely refuse to believe I had written it but for the contents.”

“And all these ‘pardonable imprudences,’ dear generous child, have been crowned by an attempt to murder the man she really infinitely preferred to me all along,” concluded Mr. Behringbright.

“Powers divine! what can be sufficient punishment for such atrocity?” exclaimed the countess.

“I have determined on the punishment. It will be the greatest mortal justice can inflict,” said Mr. Behringbright.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ANTICLIMAX AND CONCLUSION.

It was as the agents of this decreed retribution that Lord Glengariff and Dr. Bucktrout, at a subsequent interview, invited Miss Graham's accompaniment to the Red Herring Tavern—a solicitation which, being backed by such cogent arguments as the hopelessness and peril of any species of resistance amply placed at the ambassador's disposal, that young lady did not think proper to refuse compliance with.

She was still dressed as becomingly and coquettishly as ever; her gloves were drawn on so carefully that not a wrinkle could be seen in the leather; the riband bows of her bonnet were as faultlessly opened out. She looked a little paler and thinner certainly for a fortnight's sleeplessness and constant parading in public places, where every body seemed unaccountably to shun her; paler in spite of—or perhaps the more in consequence of the contrast—the liberal rouging with which she had deemed it advisable to attempt disguising the natural operation of the despondent passions on the human organisation. But the French—whose apt pupil Madeleine was in other matters—rouge even their corpses; they like so much to see every thing *comme il faut*. On the whole, I pronounce she looked very well—hardy, blooming, undaunted. The colour of her gloves was light *blue*, not—as I have seen it stated, where they ought to have known better—*rose d'amour* pink.

Camille was reclining, with no mistake whatever about *his* paleness, in an arm-chair, arrayed in a handsome yellow Chinese morning-gown, and looking almost as shrivelled, white, and bald as an almond in course of peeling for dessert, just out of the hot water. His eyes were sunk half into his skull, and, surrounded by a purple aureola, like those of a ghost, according to the most authentic reports. There really was no occasion for Madeleine's civility, who, the moment she entered the apartment, went up to him and kindly inquired how he was—ex-

tending her neat Parisian glove on the right hand at the same moment. He looked so very ill, and so he seemed to think; for he said—allowing her to take his hand, probably on a pre-arranged programme of the entertainments—“Regard me!—Alas! I may say now indeed with the great Malbrook, after so much glory and vanity of success, ‘*This was a man!*’”

“Oh, you will be sure and get quite well again soon, dear Camille! Your hair will grow again; there are plenty of things they advertise!—But you really should take more care of your health; you know how subject you are to these dreadful bilious attacks. I think it must have been that coffee that upset you at last, at our little party, for it made me ill too; else I should have come and seen you long before now,” she said, rather hurriedly.

“You are very good, Madeleine. I think it *was* the coffee,” said Camille, very drily; adding, significantly, “I shall give up coffee decidedly after *we are married!*”

“It is, then, to be at last—after the cruel divisions and struggles we have endured—this marriage of ours?” said Madeleine, in sweet and tender accents.

“On this condition alone Mr. Behringbright confers upon me ten thousand pounds, to become a partner in my house at Lyons,” said Camille, with a deep sigh.

“I shall make your fortune, then, after all, dearest Camille,” said Madeleine, playfully; “and besides, Mr. Behringbright has generously settled upon me an annuity of three hundred a-year as long as we *live*, pleasantly and amicably of course, together, and in France. Is it not an immense generosity?”

This was her first allusion to the presence of the gentleman in question, who was, however, there on the arrival, with another—not quite a stranger either, to Madeleine Graham—in a black suit and white choker. It was not any of the resident clergy of the Lakes, but a reverend gentleman who happened to be on an excursion there, having heard that Mrs. Sparrowgrass, the mother of the Sparrowgrasses, who rented one of his pews, and had a capital jointure, was also tourifying in the south of Ireland. It was, in short, the Reverend Jabez Bulteel,

whom Mr. Behringbright, in search of a facile binder of wedlock's bonds, had impressed on present service.

Camille murmured, in reply to his intended bride's remark: "It is impossible to do justice to the unexampled nobleness of that illustrious millionaire. Six thousand francs' yearly endowment from him! You will need little or nothing from me."

"Except your *constant society and surveillance*, it is understood, Monsieur Le Tellier," said Mr. Behringbright.

"Very true—most true! I comprehend my mission," replied the poor young man, shrugging his shoulders and elevating what remained of his eyebrows. "She will not *poison me easily again*, and I shall preserve her from the danger of being tempted to inflict so much suffering on others!"

This was an ill-timed observation, and might have proved fatal to the whole arrangement, had not Madeleine Graham been most thoroughly aware of the overwhelming urgency of her position. Nothing short of being immediately denounced and delivered over to the hands of justice was assured to her, in case she refused an exact compliance with what had been determined upon with regard to her future destinies. She made, however, a clever and graceful attempt, *à la Française*, to parry the force of her betrothed's last remark, and incidentally to wound the oppressive urger-on of the whole proceeding.

"I confess, then, to have made this attempt on your life you so properly denounce, Camille, in a moment of madness—driven to despair by the relentless necessity of marrying another whom I did not love. But I intended to *die with you*. You remember well that I partook of the coffee with you?"

"I remember you did so; but also you have not lost your hair, Mees Graham! That is a slight discrepancy—no Kalydor will ever restore mine!"

"Then I am sure you ought to be obliged to me for life for consenting to marry such a ridiculous, bald-looking creature!" said Madeleine, playfully but passionately.

Mr. Behringbright hastened to interrupt this interlude. "Let us proceed at once to our business," he said;

"our patient has not strength enough at present for a fatiguing altercation. Here is the license for the marriage, and the ring, Monsieur Le Tellier. You will be pleased to proceed with the ceremony now, reverend sir."

"I am ready," replied the Reverend Jabez Bulteel, pleasantly. "'Ready, aye ready!' is as much my motto as that of the distinguished family of the Napiers. 'Who gives away this woman?' I beg your pardon, Miss Graham, for the expression—it is in the rubric; *young lady*, I should have said. I remember you at the Misses Sparx' finishing school; you were an ornament to it."

"I give away this woman," responded Mr. Behringbright, quite heartily; and the ceremony, which was most truly "that same," proceeded at once.

It took hardly ten minutes to transform Miss Madeleine Graham into Madame Camille Le Tellier. The happy pair were not overwhelmed with congratulations by the company at the conclusion. There was no *déjeûner* given *à la fourchette*, or *al cuchillo* either; but almost immediately at the conclusion of the ceremony a travelling-carriage drew up at the door of the Red Herring Tavern, loaded with Miss Graham's (that was) trunks and bandboxes from Prospect Palace; to which being speedily added Monsieur Le Tellier's repaired portmanteau and shirt-front box, with all his letters properly restored, the married pair started for Paris. Dr. Bucktrout was commissioned and handsomely fee'd to see them safely so far, considering the weak state of the bridegroom's health; and on their arrival there to witness the receipt of ten thousand pounds sterling, English, on the latter's part.

Mr. Behringbright himself handed in the bride, and she did not part at all bad friends with him: rather, she said something very kind, while Camille lingered in the rear; either too weak for rapid motion, or feeling a certain faintness and dizziness come over him on the conviction of his completed happiness.

"How exceedingly good you are, Mr. Behringbright!" Madeleine said, drawing off her glove for the first time that morning, and extending her small white delicate hand to him. "But if you knew all, you would perceive

that you have reason to forgive me. It was my really passionate love for you drove me on such a naughty, naughty thing! But what could I do under the circumstances? Place yourself in my position."

"It is sufficient that I have placed you in it," said Mr. Behringbright, declining the proffered hand with a deep bow, and looking impatiently back for the lingering spouse.

"Well, I form every wish for *your* happiness in return," said Madeleine, calmly drawing on her glove again. "You are going to marry Emily Maughan, I am told; and I wish you joy, most sincerely, of the arrangement. She is rather insipid, but she will exactly suit you!"

Mr. Behringbright banged the carriage-door to, and retired just as Camille came staggering dizzily out of the little inn, somewhat revived by a dose of sal-volatile, and supported by the sturdy little frame of Dr. Bucktrout.

There was a considerable crowd to witness the departure, who gave a tremendous "hooroo!" when the bridegroom appeared. There were also some faint sibillations audible; but on the whole people seemed to respect the young Frenchman's courage. He bowed courteously, and with tears in his eyes, to their signs of approbation, entered the carriage, took his seat by his fair bride, fainted, and was driven away.

For the rest, if the reader's own great sagacity and experience in similar cases does not suggest to him the proper conclusions of the tale as respects either of the persons figuring in it, he had better perhaps listen to the following brief dialogue at the Dolce-Far-Niente Club, some five or six months after the blissful union at the Red Herring in Killarney:

"So George Cocker Behringbright is married again, after all!" exclaimed Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy, almost letting his newspaper drop with astonishment.

"Married again!" exclaimed Lord Ronald Macdonald. "Who's he married? Some duchess, I suppose."

"Does any body know," resumed Mr. Fauntleroy, drawling out the name that followed with a most contemptuous

accent, "MISS EMILY MAUGHAN, of No. 17 MOTHERWELL TERRACE, DALSTON?"

"She must be a nobody," said Sir Solomon Comyn-place. "She lives at Dalston, you say, Vivian?"

"She did live at Dalston, Sir Solomon; but I suppose now she will live with her husband at Hyde Park, and at one or other of his country palaces. I wonder he has never sent the cards; it must be some accidental omission. Besides, cards are out of fashion. I think I must call, all the same, and offer my congratulations," said Mr. Fauntleroy.

"Is there nothing else in the paper, Fauntleroy? D—n politics!—nothing of that rubbish—any thing amusing?" said the Marquis of Ramshacklegal, with a tremendous yawn.

"Well, nothing very particular, sir. The mad Lady Glengariff's dead—in one of her attacks, I suppose—so it was her own banshee she heard screaming; and Lord Glengariff's gone to Central America, for a year or two's travel in that 'undiscovered country, from whose bourne' I wish him a safe and happy return, I am sure."

"I know why he is going—it is at his mother's death," said young Sparrowgrass, who, under the auspices of Mr. Vivian Fauntleroy, was rapidly getting over the early spooniness of his character. "He was in love too with that Miss Graham—and so was I—and a whole lot of us; but *he's* taken it to heart, I suppose, that she has married the Frenchman after all."

This was accepted as good history, and every body thought the earl very foolish indeed to concern himself so much about the loss of a woman, when there are so many more to be had every where!

THE END.

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